

Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Child and Family Services Plan 2015 – 2019 Final Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) is pleased to submit our final report on the FY2015-FY2019 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). In the document that follows, we provide our responses to the Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-19-02 (PI). We have maintained the outline included in the PI and hence the document begins with our response to Section C. Below, we provide a brief overview of DCF, our mission, and an executive summary of our ongoing reform efforts.

Overview

The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency mandated to receive and respond to child abuse and neglect reports, as well as provide an array of services to children and families across the Commonwealth. DCF is charged with protecting children from abuse and neglect and strengthening families. There are currently more than 9,000 children in foster care across Massachusetts and more than 45,000 children in total served by the Department. With the understanding that every child is entitled to a home that is free from abuse and neglect, DCF's vision is to ensure the safety of children in a manner that holds the best hope of nurturing a sustained, resilient network of relationships to support the child's growth and development into adulthood.

DCF was created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1978 and began serving children and families in July 1980. To effectively fulfill its mission on a local, community-based level, DCF is organized into five regional offices: Boston, Central, Western, Northern, and Southern, which oversee the day-to-day operations of 29 area offices throughout the state. Leadership and administrative duties for DCF are guided by its Central Office in Boston.

DCF has an operating budget of over \$1 billion and a staff of more than 4,200. Over 2,500 of the staff are direct service personnel including: social workers, adoption workers, family resource workers and foster care reviewers. DCF provides services to over 20,000 families each day. Families come to DCF in one of four ways. First and most often, is through the filing of a 51A, which is an allegation that a child has been abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect. Additionally, families can come to DCF as a result of their child being truant from school or running away, families may request voluntary services, or DCF may provide services to families after a court orders a child into DCF custody.

Mission

The Department of Children and Families strives to protect children from abuse and neglect and, in partnership with families and communities, ensure that children are able to grow and thrive in a safe and nurturing environment. We believe all children have the right to grow up in a home, free from abuse and neglect, with access to food, shelter, clothing, health care, and education. As an organization, we work toward establishing the safety, permanency, and well-being of the Commonwealth's children by:

- providing supports and services to stabilize and preserve families when it is safe to do so;
- providing quality temporary alternative care when necessary to keep children safe from harm;
- working to safely reunify families, when appropriate; and
- when necessary, creating new families through kinship, guardianship, or adoption.

Reform Efforts and Progress to Date

In the fall of 2015, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker announced a major reform initiative for the Department. For years, the Department had operated with outdated policies that historically took years to update, negotiate with the union and implement. There were too few managers to properly oversee the clinical decision-making for a social work workforce already struggling with caseloads that were too high.

With the full support of the social worker's union, the Department embarked on reforms intended to stabilize the organization and improve its ability to keep children safe from harm. DCF leadership immediately began by addressing the need to reduce caseloads, improve oversight of case decisions, and creating a set of consistent policies, rooted in the fundamentals of child protection, that emphasized clinical oversight and a team approach to decision making.

Some of the results we have achieved since launching the reform initiative include:

- **Policy:** Since February 2016, the Department has developed and implemented eight new policies: Protective Intake, Supervision, Missing and Absent Children, DA Referral, Case Closing, Family Assessment and Action Planning (FAAP), Children Who Are Missing or Absent, and Foster Care Review. The Department considers all policies living documents and continuously evaluates existing policies.
- **Management Oversight:** The restoration of our Central Region and the subsequent decoupling of all 29 area offices improved management oversight and strengthened our clinical and management capacity.
- **Management Capacity:** In addition, the Department has further developed the role of Clinical Manager, dedicating a senior level manager to each office whose principal responsibility is to provide clinical support to staff. The Department's total managerial capacity has grown by over 115 managers, a 60% increase from September 2015, to provide critical oversight and leadership.
- **Social Work Staff:** Since the reform efforts began, the Department has achieved a net gain of 300 additional front-line social workers, or a 12% increase, for a total of almost 2,600 social workers. In addition, the Department has hired over 100 social worker technicians to assist with transportation, supervise parent/child visits and other tasks so that social workers have more time to focus on casework.
- **Medical Team:** The Department is required to ensure every child who comes into our care receives basic medical screenings within seven days and comprehensive medical visits within 30 days. Compliance with these medical visit requirements following a child's entry into foster care improved 248% since May 2016. DCF hired its first-ever full-time medical director in January 2016 and, for the first time in the Department's history; all 29 area offices have medical social workers. Five regional nurses, a Central Office nurse, a child psychiatry consultant, and a medical data analyst round out the medical team.
- **Staff Licensure:** In October 2015, only 54% of the Department's social worker staff was licensed. Now, 100% of staff are licensed.
- **Caseload Management Support:** The Department launched a caseload management initiative launched in April 2016. . Each regional director leads a team of field staff that is using data to address workforce capacity, develop caseload stabilization strategies and tangible supports.

- **Weighted Caseloads:** In December 2018, the average weighted caseload was 18.13 to 1, with an average of 15.3 families assigned per ongoing social worker. This is down from an all-time high of 22.33 to 1 in June 2016. It is also the third lowest caseload since January 2015, when the Department first implemented new caseload/workload standards, adjusting the formula for how cases would be counted. Importantly, the Department has sustained lower caseload ratios for more than a year. Weighted caseloads of 18:1 or lower remain our target for all staff.
- **Continuous Quality Improvements (CQI):** The Department established a CQI team in January 2016. We use their clinical audits of cases, as well as analysis of data, to assess the efficacy of the reforms we have implemented. For example, the CQI team examined a cohort of cases to determine whether we were making better decisions about which cases could be safely closed. This CQI team's quality review found that nearly 100% of case closings were appropriate and the rate of case re-openings decreased by more than 25%. The Department also launched a competitive data fellows program to train managers and staff to be points-of-contact in the field.
- **Staff Training:** The Department hired a new director of training in May 2016 who is strengthening implementation and adoption of new policy by developing multiple training options: in-person, online/web-based, and through video. An overhaul of our training for new social workers is underway and we are reworking training curriculum for all managers, supervisors and investigators.
- **Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment:** Research shows the most stable foster care placements are with kin or foster families in communities where children already live and go to school. In order to make the best matches possible, the Department has tightened its focus on foster family recruitment and, hired 18 foster care recruiters, followed by the launch of the state's first recruitment campaign in years, *Foster Massachusetts*. The Department closed calendar year 2018 with 300 more unrestricted foster homes than in January 2017, when the foster care recruiters started. They continue to work hard to grow the DCF foster parent community and have represented the Department at over 2,500 community events, information sessions and private functions over the last two years.
- **Foster Parent Supports:** At the same time the Department is working equally as hard to support current foster homes by establishing annual regional foster parent forums, increasing the number of foster parent support groups statewide, and launching a statewide e-mail list to provide foster families with important updates and benefits in real time. In May 2019, DCF launched an Intranet portal where foster parents can access information and communicate with each other 24 hours a day.
- **Kinship Care:** Between September 2015 and September 2018, the number of kinship foster homes increased statewide, by 16%. As part of the reform work, the Department developed a pilot program for five area offices that designated a social worker as the point-of-contact for identifying and engaging family members who may be suitable foster parents or lifelong connections. Their efforts resulted in a 56% improvement in initial kinship placements in 2018 and the pilot has expanded to 11 offices statewide.
- **Modernizing Foster Care Licensing:** The Department launched an online application form and redesigned the state foster care website (mass.gov/foster-care) as well as all recruitment materials.

These accomplishments stem from the first phase of the Department's Agency Improvement Leadership Team (AILT). DCF has used the AILT model since the initiation of September 2015 reform to address complex challenges more efficiently and to help drive cultural and organizational change. The team comprised of Central Office staff, regional directors, and other managers from the field meet weekly to discuss and focus on priorities for agency improvement.

The Department launched the second phase of AILT at the beginning of calendar year 2019. For phase II, we have identified 4 new priorities of improvement and have dedicated internal working groups for each: social work practice, permanency, placement stability, and services for intact families.

Below is a summary of each workgroup's goals:

1. The **Humanizing Social Work Practice** group is developing strategies to strengthen clinical practice and emphasize responsiveness to toxic stress and trauma in our daily work. This will be accomplished by embedding practices that can help reduce trauma when children are removed from home, improve the quality of child visits, and understanding the family struggles that contribute to child abuse and neglect..
2. One of the most awesome responsibilities of a child welfare agency is to stabilize children in a permanent, loving home as quickly and safely as possible. The **Timely and Appropriate Permanency Outcomes** work group is taking a hard look at current policies and processes around reunification, adoption and other permanency plans to see where we can be more efficient.
3. When children can no longer safely live in their family homes, the Department strives to find the best match possible, whether it is with a relative, a foster parent, or, for children with therapeutic needs, in congregate care. **The Appropriate, Stable and Well-Supported Placements** work group is building on the foster parent recruitment and retention initiatives from the first stages of our reform, while devoting new energy and focus to expanding the Department's use of kinship placements; developing stronger working relationships with foster parents; and providing more resources and support to help foster parents who cope with the challenges of working with traumatized children and the emotional toll of serving in this role.
4. At any given time, DCF serves approximately 80 percent of children at home. In these cases, the Department's primary role is to connect families to services that help parents meet their children's needs and develop skills to keep them safe. Depending on the family, services may include behavioral health or substance abuse treatment, in home therapy, parenting classes, parent coaching, employment assistance or help with accessing financial resources. The **Safe and Appropriate Services to Intact Families** work group is evaluating the Department's utilization of services, across the state, to better understand existing strengths and needs, while also examining current practice to ensure that parents have a voice in the planning and decision making, when it comes to the services they receive. The work group is developing new tools and processes for Area Offices to leverage in their regular clinical meetings to better coach and mentor staff, with the goals of improving critical thinking skills and decision-making on cases.

The end goal of these efforts is to achieve significant, lasting and positive change in the Department and that means progress will continue but it will be additive. For example, it is going to take time for staff to absorb the new policies and the change they represent. Likewise, the Department increased management positions by 60%, but those managers are new and it will take time to build their capacity to provide leadership and oversight. Going forward the Department remains firmly committed to continued reform and achieving the best possible outcomes for children and families.

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The FY2015-FY2019 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) final report will be posted upon approval on the DCF website: www.mass.gov/dcf. The FY 2018 APSR is also posted there.

C. 2015 – 2019 FINAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

C1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) continues to engage in substantial, ongoing, and meaningful collaboration in the implementation of the 2015-2019 CFSP, our CFSR PIP, and our IV-E PIP. Collaboration has been a cornerstone of best practice in keeping children safe and nurturing healthy families and supportive communities. In so doing the Department works with a full array of partners including youth and families, community stakeholders and providers, advocates and related organizations, along with state and federal agencies. While DCF's collaboration has always been strong, the Department now places greater emphasis on not simply engaging partners but deepening the work necessary to move from collaborative discussions to generating meaningful change across our collaborative platforms. Using a multi-level approach, the Department's collaboration is intended to solve problems, and build community and service system capacity to meet the needs of children, youth and families through practice, policy and systemic reform.

2015-2019 CFSP Collaboration

Collaboration with children and families who receive services from the Department remains a high priority. As such we actively maintain the DCF Family Advisory Council (FAC) which includes biological parents, kinship care providers, and foster and adoptive parents who meet regularly to provide input. Representatives of the FAC are an active part of the agency's statewide managers group which convenes monthly to review performance and provide input on agency improvements.

The DCF Youth Advisory Council (see page 144), and the Statewide Advisory Committee are also important collaborators. The Statewide Advisory Committee is comprised of community partners, providers, advocates, and sister state agencies. In addition, each DCF Area Board office is represented on the group. Each DCF Area Board's includes parents, foster parents, youth, community service providers and other community leaders. Together they provide critical community input in the Department's planning and casework practice.

The Department also engages the courts, local schools systems, and other state agencies to address the needs of children and families involved with DCF. Further, the Department has engaged in dialogue with the Aquinnah and Mashpee tribes to recruit foster home and coordinate service delivery to tribal children and families.

Below, we highlight specific examples of how the Department collaborated with these resources in the past year with regard to the implementation of our 2015-2019 CFSP, CFSR PIP, and IV-E PIP. We also highlight planned ongoing collaboration in the new year.

The Department's organizational partners are a variety of agencies and organizations that are engaged with DCF on initiatives designed to protect children and strengthen families including:

- Administrative Office of the Juvenile and Family Court
- Association of Behavioral Health Care
- Berkshire Children and Families
- Children and Family Law Project
- Children's Trust Fund of Massachusetts
- Committee for Public Counsel Services
- Department of Children and Families Family Advisory Council
- Department of Children and Families Youth Advisory Council
- Department of Early Education and Care

- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Transitional Assistance
- Department of Youth Services
- Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
- Family Nurturing Center
- Jane Doe, Inc.
- Justice Resource Institute
- Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange
- Massachusetts Alliance for Families
- Massachusetts Association of Private Schools
- Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- MA Chapter- NASW
- Massachusetts Citizens for Children
- Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
- Massachusetts Network for Foster Alumni
- Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers
- Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- MassHealth
- More Than Words
- New England Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors Association
- Office of the Child Advocate
- Parent Professional Advisory League
- Rosie's Place
- The Children's League of Massachusetts
- The Parents Helping Parents
- United Way
- University of Massachusetts Medical Center
- Wayside

PSSF and State Level Collaboration

Collaborations to refine policies, practices, and engages in system level conversation with state agency partners to include: The Courts, Juvenile Probation Department, Department of Education (DOE), Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Department of Youth Services (DYS), Department of Disabled Services (DDS), Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).

Collaboration has become an invaluable tool for an ongoing process that hopes to create positive outcomes and strengthen families. For example, collaborating with DYS, through the Juvenile Detention Alternative (JDAI) initiative allowed the courts, youth services and child welfare to come together to build team-based decision-making processes and address issues related to disproportionate involvement of youth of color in the juvenile court system. In addition to a series of training conferences, the work resulted in the film "Seeing RED", a documentary that highlights the problem of over-representation of children of color in juvenile justice and child welfare system. As part of the strategic plan to help address this nationwide system issue and reverse current outcomes, Community Coalition and Family Resource Center staff was trained as facilitators. Additionally, members of the Family Advisory Committee attend the showing and

workshop in local communities. In an effort to replicate the process across the commonwealth multiple centers are used host collaborative discussion with community stakeholders and families.

The Department of Education (DOE) was awarded a federal grant that helps explore best practice to engage families within the school system. DCF continues to participate in the initial design of the Family Engagement Framework, and provide invaluable feedback on how school and child welfare family engagement is a mutual process that supports families through a continuum of care. Likewise, the Department has worked with DOE and local school systems to create and implement guidance regarding best interest determinations related the Every Child Succeeds Act which prioritizes the enrollment for foster children in their home school and the related process for transportation decision-making.

The Department has built a strong relationship with the Department of Public Health, using the opportunity to collaborate in various initiatives to include The Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) programs a federally funded grant that prioritizes visiting services to eligible families in at-risk communities. DCF funded programs, such as the FRC's and Coalitions have been to the extent possible locally collaborating with home visiting agencies within the communities they serve. Additionally DCF staff contributes to the overall program development, attend quarterly meetings to the extent possible provide technical assistance by sharing information on current programs and policies, that aligns with DPH policies on related topics. When applicable and there is an opportunity staff collaborates on initiatives that related to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, safe sleep, shaken baby syndrome and other child protective/family support.

DCF since 1994 through the federally funded Promoting Stable Safe Family grant has founded a network of Community Connections Coalitions that are located in underserved communities in MA. These program primary functions are to provide families with easy access to information and referral to families who are in need of services. Additionally, Coalitions serve as a forum that mobilizes families, develop and sustain that better aligns a collective response to the identified needs of families with the goal of preventing child abuse and neglect. These partnerships have offered the opportunity to further engage informal community partners that extends the network of family resources in their respective communities. Using the coalition model other approaches that are effective in providing resources to community families with multiple challenges have been developed and implemented, such as; Family Resource Centers, Parents Helping Parents hotline support and Kinship and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren programs. These programs partnership with DCF have provided a lifeline to families. They encourage families to participate in preventive services before they are referred out to child welfare or other governmental services.

Foster Care Support and Recruitment Collaboration

Like our partnerships to engage and support families, collaboration is vital to the successful recruitment and support of foster and kinship families and to supporting those caregivers in the community. The following is a list of some of DCF's ongoing collaborations:

- Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE): coordinated efforts in the recruitment of child specific adoptive families. All children with a goal of adoption are listed on the MARE website.
- Jordan's Furniture: public/private partnership that focuses on the recruitment of adoptive homes. This partnership began 15-years ago.
- Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) Kid's Net Program: a foster/pre-adoptive family support services contract which provides training, emergency child care, respite, and annual training conferences.

- Recruitment collaborations with Fostering Hope and The Forgotten Initiative to provide support, training, and recruit new foster families. Both are faith-based organizations working in partnership with DCF.
 - Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDot) provides DCF with billboard space to showcase our foster care recruitment campaign.
 - Massachusetts General Hospital will host an informational day in their hospital for the purposes of recruiting foster families.
 - Boston Children's Hospital will host an informational day on a monthly basis in Boston and Peabody. The hospital is also hosting a kick-off event in May to promote their partnership with us in the recruitment of foster & adoptive families.
 - Foster Parent Recruitment Ambassadors: current foster parents selected by their area offices to represent DCF at recruitment events and assist regional recruiters with the planning and selection of events.
 - In 2017 and 2018, DCF hosted Regional Foster Parent Forums. Each of the 5 DCF regions invited foster parents to a forum in which the foster parents could be updated on activities that the Department is engaged in to recruit more foster families and to support the work that foster parents do every day on behalf of the children placed in their homes.
 - Regional recruitment events are held monthly in May to recruit new foster families. All DCF Area Offices participate in the event which is advertised statewide.
 - Each May, in recognition of Foster Parent Appreciation Month, our 29 Area Offices hold appreciation events in order to acknowledge all of our foster parents for their hard work and devotion to the children placed in their homes.

CFSR PIP Related Collaboration

- MA Court Improvement Program (MA CIP) - Reducing barriers to permanency and stability for children in placement through DCF and contracted providers is a core MA CFSR PIP strategy. Toward this end, DCF Commissioner Spears met with the MA CIP leaders in September 2016. Out of this meeting, a MA CFSR PIP Key Activity was developed: Collaborate with MA Court Improvement Program (CIP) to increase stability and permanency for Massachusetts children. Follow-up meetings with Commissioner Spears, DCF Senior Staff and CIP have continued through as recently as **September 2019**. MA CFSR PIP work will focus on using data and metrics to better understand and address the permanency needs of children. This will include understanding the characteristics of children across permanency goals including adoption, guardianship, and reunification. This data will also inform the Department about which Area Offices and local courts may need additional support to improve permanency outcomes. DCF will continue its focus on increasing kinship placements for children who cannot remain safely in their homes, increasing family finding activity for children in care, and cross-training for court personnel and DCF staff in both kinship and family finding issues. **In addition, the Department and MA CIP discussed specific projects that collaboration would be beneficial to obtaining permanency for children. The first project will be to work with the Registry of Vital Records to implement electronic birth certificates for the Juvenile Court and DCF. This will require determining the barriers, the costs and identifying sources that fund this project. With electronic birth certificates fathers can be identified early on. This raised an issue regarding the need for a joint paternity training with CIP, DCF, the Juvenile Court and attorneys who represent parents and children. All parties agree that this will be a useful training and should occur within this state fiscal year. In May, 2020 CIP, along with the Juvenile Court and DCF shall participate in a Pathways follow-up conference. Meetings will be held to determine the agenda and the goals of this conference. In December a conference will be held**

regarding the Department's updated 6 week placement reviews (initial placement review). The invitees to the conference will include attorneys, Juvenile Court judges and DCF staff. The purpose of this conference will be to discuss the new process, which asks the question does the child need to remain in placement as well as is the current placement of the child the most appropriate and best placement for this child. Finally, MA CIP will be working with DCF and CPCS to increase the number of joint trainings. The goal of these joint trainings will be to increase the quality of legal representation.

- Massachusetts Alliance for Families (MAFF) - Reducing barriers to permanency and stability for children in placement through DCF and contracted providers is a core MA CFSR PIP strategy. In a collaborative effort with MAFF, the Department identified the MA CFSR Key Activity of increasing training and support for foster and adoptive parents with the goal of reducing the number of disruptions in foster care and adoptive placements.
- National Council on Crime & Delinquency, Children's Research Center's (NCCD/CRC) - Embedding assessment of safety and risk into daily practice is a core MA CFSR PIP strategy. The Department worked with NCCD/CRC to develop a set of MA CFSR PIP Key Activities which are targeted at validating the Department's current risk assessment tool and/or developing and validating a new tool. Working with the DCF Child Welfare Institute and the Policy and Practice Unit, NCCD/CRC is completing development of a train-the-trainer curriculum and set of E-Learning modules to support the i-FamilyNet rollout of the revised risk assessment tool in September 2019.
- Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and the Treatment Continuum - Improving services and treatment for children and families affected by substance misuse is a core MA CFSR PIP strategy. A MA CFSR PIP Key Activity is to collaborate with Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and the Treatment Continuum to improve information sharing between the systems, provide cross-systems training, and address treatment access needs for youth and adults involved in child welfare needing substance abuse treatment services.
- National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment (NRCDR) - Increasing initiatives for recruitment of foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers is a core MA CFSR PIP strategy. Utilizing preliminary discussions with NRCDR, several MA CFSR PIP Key Activities have been developed with the overall goal of creating a cohesive and comprehensive approach to recruitment and retention of foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers. DCF continued this work following the closure of the NRCDR working with Solomon McCown and Company to develop a comprehensive and social media rich foster care recruitment campaign entitled *Foster MA*.
- University of Southern Maine/Muskie School of Public Service/Cutler Institute - A key MA CFSR PIP strategy was to improve the training provided by DCF Child Welfare Institute (CWI). Toward this end, the Department contracted with the USM Muskie School of Public Service to assist in the development of a new pre-service curriculum with the goal of improving skill-building, increasing depth of practice, building fidelity to policies, reinforcing agency emphasis on quality improvement, and promoting DCF as a learning organization.

IV-E State Plan PIP Collaboration

- N/A the DCF title IV-E State Plan PIP contained procedural corrections that did not require collaboration with stakeholders external to the Department.

C2. UPDATE ON ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE, THE PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT AND PROGRESS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

The Department completed its CFSR3 Statewide Assessment and onsite review in September 2015. To address the APSR 2020 requirement, the Department utilized the most up-to-date Children's Bureau Massachusetts Child and Family Services Review (CFSR3) Data Profile (January 2019) and the 2017 Child Maltreatment Report. As a supplement, where indicated data was extracted from the Department's SACWIS. A brief description of status and where applicable new challenges is provided for each CFSR Outcome and Systemic Factor.

Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes

Safety Outcome 1 (S1): Children Are First and Foremost, Protected from Abuse and Neglect

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 43% of the 28 applicable cases reviewed. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- New Challenges: While CFSR3 PIP Item 1 and Item 2 goals were met during this review period as evidenced below, the Department continues to respond to increasing numbers of CA/N referrals and corresponding responses.

Chart S1. STATE DATA PROFILE CA/N Reports & Children In Placement

	FFY2013		FFY2014		FFY2015		FFY2016		FFY2017		FFY2018	
Total CA/N Reports Disposed	37,867		47,591		46,116		48,252		45,366		45,686	
Substantiated	14,071	37.2%	22,282	46.8%	22,079	47.9%	22,387	46.4%	17,835	39.3%	18,297	40.0%
Unsubstantiated	8,161	21.6%	13,771	28.9%	14,235	30.9%	18,137	37.6%	19,122	42.2%	19,532	42.8%
Other	15,635	41.3%	11,538	24.2%	9,802	21.3%	7,728	16.0%	8,409	18.5%	7,857	17.2%
*Children Served in Placement	13,609		14,907		15,899		16,801		16,904		16,862	
Children in Placement on the Last Day of the Year + Discharges During the Year.	Source: MA DCF SACWIS (AFCARS & NCANDS) – includes approved methodology adjustments											

Significant year-over-year increases in total CA/N reports disposed between FFY2013 and FFY2016 (27.4% increase) began to reverse in FFY2017 (6.0% decrease between FFY2016 and FFY2017) and continued through FFY2018 (5.3% decrease between FFY2016 and FFY2018). During the same time period between FFY2013 and FFY2016, a significant increase in substantiation rates was also observed (24.9%). This increase is directly correlated with a corresponding decrease in use of the Department's Initial Assessment differential response track in FFY2014 and FFY2015. With the implementation of a new Protective Intake Policy in March 2016, the Department eliminated differential response. However, along with a Support (i.e., substantiation) decision, a disposition of Substantiated Concern has been added. Substantiated Concern dispositions do not identify a perpetrator nor a victim. As such they are classified within the "Other" category on Chart S1 above. Of note, the number of children served in placement increased 23.9% between FFY2013 and FFY2018.

Safety Outcome 1 – Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment.

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the timeframes established by agency policies or state statutes.

- Status: The initiation of timely CPS responses and face-to-face contacts with children involved in screened-in reports of alleged maltreatment is a primary means of ensuring the safety of children. State policy at the time of the 2015 CFSR3 required that reports screened in for Initial Assessment have an initial contact from the social worker within 2 business days of assignment. For CPS investigations, state policy required that reports assigned for Emergency response were to be initiated within 2 hours from the time the report was received by the Department. Reports assigned for Non-Emergency response were to be initiated within 2 business days from the date the report was received by the Department. The Department's screening activities initiate and are considered part of the investigative process.

The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 on the 2015 CFSR3, because 43% of the 28 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.

- Item 1 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 45.5% of 44 applicable cases. This represents a 5.8% improvement over the 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 1 Adjusted PIP Goal: 52.3%
- Item 1 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 52.9% – PIP Goal Met.
- New Challenges: N/A

Statewide Safety Data Indicators: Recurrence of Maltreatment & Maltreatment in Foster Care

The reduction of the recurrence of maltreatment and incidence of maltreatment in foster care are important measures of the Department's success in promoting the safety of children and families. Both were identified as areas needing improvement in the 2015 CFSR3. The Department monitors maltreatment in foster care and recurrence of maltreatment on open and closed cases on a monthly/ quarterly/annual basis as a component of its performance management and accountability system.

Chart S2.

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Perf.	Observed Performance	RSP	95% Confidence Interval	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance
Maltreatment in foster care (victimization per 100,000 days in care)	9.67	Lower	25.42	34.30	32.08 – 36.68	14A–14B, FFY14
	9.67	Lower	22.42	30.13	28.14 – 32.26	15A–15B, FFY15
	9.67	Lower	24.35	32.48	30.48 – 34.61	16A–16B, FFY16
	unavailable	Lower	20.55*		unavailable	18A–18B, FFY18*
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.5%	Lower	20.0%	25.4%	24.8% – 25.9%	FFY14–15
	9.5%	Lower	19.4%	24.8%	24.2% – 25.4%	FFY15–16
	9.5%	Lower	16.9%	21.8%	21.3% – 22.4%	FFY16–17

*Source: MA DCF SACWIS

- Status: The Department has historically fallen below the national performance for Maltreatment in Foster Care and Recurrence of Maltreatment. As evidenced in Chart S2 above, children in the care and custody of DCF are experiencing more Maltreatment in Foster Care than the national performance of 9.67 per 100,000 days in care. Further, the Department is evidencing more incidences of Recurrence of Maltreatment than the national performance of 9.5%. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Maltreatment in Foster Care (victimization per 100,000 days in care) has been calculated for FFY18 utilizing the Department's SACWIS. FFY18's (18A–18B) observed performance was 20.55 per 100,000 days in care. While below the national performance, Massachusetts is evidencing a significant 19.2% improvement over FFY14's observed performance.
- FFY16-17's observed performance was 16.9%. Though below the national performance, this is a significant 15.5% improvement over FFY14-15's observed performance.

Safety Outcome 2 (S2): Children Are Safely Maintained In Their Own Homes Whenever Possible and Appropriate

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 66% of the 65 cases reviewed. The outcome was substantially achieved in 75% of the 40 foster care cases, 52% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- New Challenges: N/A

As indicated in Chart S3 below, CPS referrals increased significantly between FFY2011 and FFY2018. This 17.1% rise in referrals tracks with the occurrence of several high profile child fatalities within the time period. CPS referrals are tracked at the state/region/area office level.

Chart S3.	Counts of Referrals Received by DCF							
	FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015	FFY2016	FFY2017	FFY2018*
Referrals received by CPS	73,294	75,439	75,560	77,974	80,435	82,851	82,828	85,794

*Source: MA DCF SACWIS

Screen-in Rates

As evidenced in Chart S4 below, screen-in rates per 1,000 in Child Population increased significantly between FFY2011 and FFY2018. This 26.2% rise in screen-in rates per 1,000, which tracks with the occurrence of several high profile child fatalities during the time period, climbed at a significantly greater rate than referral rates. Screen-in rates are tracked at the state/region/area office level.

Chart S4.	Rate per 1,000 in Child Population per CB Child Maltreatment 2017 Report							
	FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015	FFY2016	FFY2017	FFY2018*
Screen-in rate	44.3	44.4	45.0	55.6	54.7	57.4	54.0	55.9

*Source: MA DCF SACWIS

Victimization Rates

As evidenced in Chart S5, victimization rates have risen significantly between FFY2011 and FFY2018. This significant 31.3% rise in the victimization rate, which tracks with the occurrence of several high profile child fatalities within the time period, climbed at a greater rate than referral rates during this 8-year time span. Victimization rates are tracked at the state/region/area office level.

Chart S5.	Rate per 1,000 in Child Population							
	FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015	FFY2016	FFY2017	FFY2018*
Victimization rate	14.4	13.7	14.5	22.9	22.5	23.3	18.3	18.9

*Source: MA DCF SACWIS

Safety Outcome 2 – Item 2: Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

- Status: Assuring the safety of children and mitigating risk to the safety of children is a cornerstone of child welfare practice. The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 62% of the 29 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 71% of the 7 applicable foster care cases, 55% of the 20 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 2 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 77.8% of 27 applicable cases. This represents a significant 25.5% improvement over the 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 2 Adjusted PIP Goal: 85.0%
- Item 2 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 92.5% – PIP GOAL MET.
- New Challenges: No new challenges identified. Performance continues to improve (PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018) increased to 95.5%, a solid strength).

Safety Outcome 2 – Item 3: Safety Assessment and Management

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) living in their own homes or while in foster care.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 66% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 75% of the 40 applicable foster care cases, 52% of the 23 applicable in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 3 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 71.4% of 70 applicable cases. This represents an 8.2% improvement over the 2015 CFSR3 results.

- Item 3 Adjusted PIP Goal: 76.3%
- Item 3 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 78.6% – PIP GOAL MET.
- New Challenges: No new challenges identified. Performance continues to improve (PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018) increased to 82.9%).
 - In 82.9% of the cases the Department met with children frequently (at least monthly), completed Risk Assessments during responses, completed or updated the Family Assessment and Action Plan (FAAP) during the period under review, assessed home safety, completed announced and unannounced visits depending on the situation, had ongoing contact with collaterals, and discussed risk and safety to children during supervision.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children Have Permanency and Stability In Their Living Situations

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 35% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.
- New Challenges: The Department is evidencing continued improvement in permanency for children in 12 months. Re-entry rates continue to lag behind national performance, nonetheless re-entry reduction is evident. Placement stability remains an area needing improvement.

Chart P1.

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Perf.	RSP	95% Confidence Interval	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance
Perm in 12 months (entries)	42.7%	Higher	44.1%	42.9% – 45.3%	16A – 18B
Perm in 12 months (12-23 mos.)	45.9%	Higher	34.4%	32.7 % – 36.1%	18A – 18B
Perm in 12 months (24 + mos.)	31.8%	Higher	26.0%	24.9% – 27.2%	18A – 18B
Re-entry to foster care in 12 mos.	8.1%	Lower	10.2%	9.1% – 11.4%	16A – 18B

The Department is striving to increase progress toward permanency. Despite these efforts, DCF has not yet achieved the national performance on each of the permanency indicators.

In order to support the strengths of children and families and address the needs that brought them to the attention of the Department, effective service delivery and permanency planning is critical. Effective service delivery and permanency planning ensures that children are returned to their homes as quickly and safely as possible and that caregivers have the capacity to ensure the safety and well-being of their children. As evidenced in Chart P1 above, the Department is meeting (exceeding by 3.3%) the national performance of moving children to permanency within 12 months of entering care. While evidencing improvement over prior review periods, the Department is challenged to meet the national performance for those children who remain in care longer than 12 months.

Recognizing that performance on Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Care has improved, the Department is making concerted efforts to improve performance on Re-entry to Foster Care in 12 Months. The Department recognizes that these paired measures are interrelated and that success necessitates that services be in place to stabilize exits to permanency and mitigate factors leading to re-entry. As evidenced in Chart P2, Re-entry to Foster Care in 12 Months has improved a significant 11.3% relative to performance at the start of the six (6) AFCARS cohort periods (i.e., from 11.5% to 10.2%).

Chart P2.

	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP) CFSR3 Data Profile – January 2017					
	13B16A	14A16B	14B17A	15A17B	15B18A	16A18B
Re-entry to foster care in 12 mos.	11.5%	11.2%	12.3%	12.9%	11.1%	10.2%

Permanency Outcome 1 – Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s).

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 80% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 4 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 57.1% of 42 applicable cases. This represents a significant 28.6% decrease in performance relative to the 2015 CFSR3 results. The Department is working to address stability for children in its care.
- Item 4 Adjusted PIP Goal: 64.1%
- Item 4 PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018): 59.5% – PIP GOAL NOT MET.
- New Challenges: While the Department's strength rating improved a significant 46.9% (i.e., 40.5% to 59.5%) relative to the Jan-Jun 2018 reporting period, the following was noted:
 - Children experienced multiple temporary placements.
 - Children were placed in short-term programs (i.e., STARR) upon entry into care and/or following a placement disruption. These settings are deemed by ACF/CB to be instable.
 - Use of night-to-night foster home settings.
 - Behavioral dysregulation factored into a subset of the observed placement disruptions.

Placement Stability

Stability of children in out-of-home care is an important indicator of the Department's efforts to achieve permanency for children and families. Multiple moves disrupt a child's ability to maintain connections with family and to develop the connections needed for positive emotional and social growth. Furthermore, instability in placement significantly impacts a child's educational achievement. Research has shown that the more frequently a child moves subsequent to a home removal, the longer the time to permanency. As evidenced in Charts P3 and P4, Placement Stability is an area in need of improvement.

Chart P3.

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Perf.	RSP	95% Confidence Interval	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance
Placement Stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.44	Lower	9.02	8.83 – 9.23	18A – 18B

Chart P3 indicates that children in the Department's care experience double the number of moves per 1,000 days in care than the national performance. Furthermore as evidenced in Chart P4 below, performance on this indicator has declined by 19.5% in the past six (6) paired AFCARS cohort periods.

Chart P4.

Risk Standardized Performance (RSP) CFSR3 Data Profile – January 2019						
	15B16A	16A16B	16B17A	17A17B	17B18A	18A18B
Placement Stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	7.55	8.61	8.68	9.49	9.05	9.02

Placement with Kin

The Department has observed increased stability when initial-placement is with kin. Accordingly, the Department has doubled efforts to identify kin as a placement alternative when an out of home placement is necessary. These efforts have resulted in significant increases to kinship placement utilization.

	DCF Target	SFY'08	SFY'09	SFY'10	SFY'11	SFY'12	SFY'13	SFY'14	SFY'15	SFY'16	SFY'17	SFY'18
Kinship Care Rate Kinship as a % of all children in out-of-home placement	≥ 28.5%	19.2%	22.6%	22.7%	24.5%	26.0%	26.9%	29.4%	31.5%	32.4%	33.3%	36.0%

Data Source: MA DSSRP210 – Children in Placement

At the end of SFY2018, 36.0% of all children in out-of-home placement were placed with kin. This represents a steady increase over time, and a significant 87.5% increase over SFY2008. In an effort to identify disproportionality and address the disparity in outcomes, this indicator is tracked by race and ethnicity. More recently, the Department is tracking the rate of initial placement with kin (i.e., Kin First). Eight months into SFY'19, 16.0% of children within this cohort are placed with kin at entry into care.

	DCF Target	SFY'10	SFY'11	SFY'12	SFY'13	SFY'14	SFY'15	SFY'16	SFY'17	SFY'18
Kinship Care as a % of Departmental Foster Care*	≥ 55.0%	46.4%	48.1%	51.4%	52.1%	53.1%	56.3%	56.4%	56.8%	55.7%

*Departmental Foster Care = foster family Data Source: MA DSSRP210 – Children in Placement

At the end of SFY2018, 55.7% of all children in Departmental Foster Care (i.e., foster family home setting) were placed with kin. This represents a significant 20.0% increase over SFY2010. In an effort to identify disproportionality and address the disparity in outcomes, this indicator is also tracked by race and ethnicity. More recently, the Department is tracking the rate of initial placement with kin for children whose initial placement is in a foster family home setting (i.e., Kin First). Eight months into SFY'19, 22.7% of children within this cohort are placed with kin at entry into care.

Permanency Outcome 1 – Item 5: Permanency Goal for Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 55% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 5 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 59.5% of 42 applicable cases. This represents an 8.2% improvement over the 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 5 Adjusted PIP Goal: 66.4%
- Item 5 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 69.0% – PIP GOAL MET.

- New Challenges: No new challenges identified. Performance continues to remain steady (PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018) at 69.1%).

Permanency Outcome 1 – Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 50% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 6 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 45.2% of 42 applicable cases. This represents a 9.6% decrease in performance relative to the 2015 CFSR3 results. The Department is working to address permanency for children in its care.
- Item 6 Adjusted PIP Goal: 52.2%
- Item 6 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 59.5% – PIP GOAL MET.
- New Challenges: N/A

Permanency Outcome 2: The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections Is Preserved for Children

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 65% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.
- New Challenges: N/A

Permanency Outcome 2 – Item 7: Placement With Siblings

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 64% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 7 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 56.7% of 30 applicable cases. This represents a significant 11.4% decrease in performance relative to the 2015 CFSR3 results. The Department is working to address placement with siblings for children in its care.
- Item 7 Adjusted PIP Goal: NONE ESTABLISHED
- Item 7 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 66.7% – though not a PIP item, performance represents a significant 17.6% improvement over baseline.

- New Challenges: N/A

Permanency Outcome 2 – Item 8: Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 59% of the 29 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. In 62% of the 13 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship. In 73% of the 26 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship. In 44% of the 9 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 8 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 77.5% of 40 applicable cases. This represents a significant 31.4% improvement over 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 8 Adjusted PIP Goal: NONE ESTABLISHED
- Item 8 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 83.8% – though not a PIP item, performance represents a significant 8.1% improvement over baseline.
- New Challenges: N/A

Permanency Outcome 2 – Item 9: Preserving Connections

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 74% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 9 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 90.2% of 41 applicable cases. This represents a significant 21.9% improvement over 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 9 Adjusted PIP Goal: NONE ESTABLISHED
- Item 9 PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018): 92.7% – though not a PIP item, performance represents a 2.8% improvement over baseline—approaching a solid area of strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Permanency Outcome 2 – Item 10: Relative Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 71% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 10 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 85.4% of 41 applicable cases. This represents a significant 20.3% improvement over 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 10 Adjusted PIP Goal: NONE ESTABLISHED
- Item 10 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 94.7% – though not a PIP item, performance represents a significant 10.9% improvement over baseline—nearing a solid strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Permanency Outcome 2 – Item 11: Relationship of Child With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 64% of the 28 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. In 68% of the 28 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother. In 60% of the 10 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 11 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 63.2% of 38 applicable cases. This represents a 1.3% decrease in performance relative to 2015 CFSR3 results. The Department is working to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between children in foster care and their parents/primary caregivers.
- Item 11 Adjusted PIP Goal: NONE ESTABLISHED
- Item 11 PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018): 66.7% – though not a PIP item, performance represents a 5.5% improvement over baseline.
- New Challenges: N/A

Well-being Outcome 1: Families Have Enhanced Capacity to Provide for Their Children's Needs

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 33% of the 40 foster care cases, 39% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.

- New Challenges: N/A

Well-Being Outcome 1 – Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 38% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength. Item 12 was rated as Strength in 35% of the 40 foster care cases, 43% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 12 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 38.6% of 70 applicable cases. This represents a 1.6% improvement over the 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 12 Adjusted PIP Goal: 43.8%
- Item 12 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 58.6% – PIP GOAL MET.
- New Challenges: No new challenges identified. Performance continues to improve (PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018) increased to 64.3%).

Well-Being Outcome 1 – Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 58% of the 62 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. Item 13 was rated as Strength in 68% of the 37 foster care cases, 48% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases. In 73% of the 41 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning. In 72% of the 54 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning. In 58% of the 33 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 13 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 61.4% of 70 applicable cases. This represents a 5.9% improvement over the 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 13 Adjusted PIP Goal: 66.7%
- Item 13 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 71.4% – PIP GOAL MET.

- New Challenges: No new challenges identified. Performance continues to improve (PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018) increased to 75.0%).
 - For reviewed cases where family involvement was a noted strength, the agency met with children and parents on a regular basis and discussed progress with their action plan tasks. Interviews confirmed that family members understood why the Department was involved and what needed to be done in order to close their case. Notwithstanding, based on Department case practice, children under age 14 are not always engaged in case planning, as they are not assigned action plan tasks. Federal guidelines require the Department to engage all school age children in age appropriate case planning conversations, unless there is a specific clinical reason why they cannot participate.
 - The concept of engagement is something the Department has been committed to for more than 10 years. This will be sustained through: training, supervision, revising policy to be more consistent and understandable, and our CQI process.

Well-Being Outcome 1 – Item 14: Caseworker Visits With Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 74% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. Item 14 was rated as Strength in 83% of the 40 foster care cases, 61% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 14 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 81.4% of 70 applicable cases. This represents a significant 10.0% improvement over the 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 14 Adjusted PIP Goal: 85.6%
- Item 14 PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018): 82.9% – PIP GOAL NOT MET.
- New Challenges: The Department's strength rating improved 3.6% (i.e., 80.0% to 82.9%) relative to the Jan-Jun 2018 reporting period. While the frequency of visits with children was generally found to be sufficient, social workers did not routinely visit with children one-on-one (i.e., alone). As such, the Department is actively engaged in an Agile Scrum effort to increase both the frequency and quality of visits with children.

Well-Being Outcome 1 – Item 15: Caseworker Visits With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 44% of the 54 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. Item 15 was rated as Strength in 45% of the 29 foster care cases, 48% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases. In 59% of the 54 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient. In 47% of the 32 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the

frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.

- Item 15 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 55.2% of 67 applicable cases. This represents a significant 25.5% improvement over the 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 15 Adjusted PIP Goal: 60.7%
- Item 15 PIP Review Quarters 1&2 Performance (Jan-Jun 2018): 69.7% – PIP GOAL MET.
- New Challenges: Though the Department met its PIP goal for Item 15, the Department is actively engaged in an Agile Scrum effort to increase both the frequency and quality of visits.

Well-being Outcome 2: Children Receive Appropriate Services to Meet Their Educational Needs

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 90% of 42 applicable cases reviewed.
- New Challenges: N/A

Well-Being Outcome 2 – Item 16: Educational Needs of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 90% of the 42 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. Item 16 was rated as Strength in 92% of the 36 applicable foster care cases, 80% of the 5 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 16 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 94.1% of 51 applicable cases. This represents a 4.6% improvement over 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 16 Adjusted PIP Goal: NONE ESTABLISHED
- Item 16 PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018): 97.7% – though not a PIP item, performance represents a 3.8% improvement over baseline—and evidences a solid area of strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Education is critical to a child's healthy growth and development and sense of well-being. The Department's efforts to ensure that children are receiving appropriate education services were identified as an area of strength in the 2015 CFSR3 Report. An ongoing focus in this area continues to support children's academic achievement. Recognizing that educational achievement is impacted by CPS involvement, the Department proactively works with teachers and school departments to ensure that children in its care or custody receive appropriate educational services and are making progress toward achievement of educational or vocational goals.

The Department tracks a number of education-related indicators:

- High School Four-Year & Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates
- Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Passage Rates
- Attendance Rates
- High School Equivalency Testing Program (HSE) Rates (formerly GRE)

High School Four-Year & Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates

Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (ESE) calculates and reports on graduation rates as part of overall efforts to improve educational outcomes for students in the Commonwealth. The Department tracks these graduation rates for children in its custody utilizing the same methodology utilized by ESE.

Adopting ESE's methodology to calculate the four-year graduation rate, the Department tracks a cohort of students in custody from 9th grade through high school and then divides the number of students who graduate within four (4) years by the total number in the cohort. This rate provides the percentage of the cohort that graduates in four (4) years or less.

Recognizing that many students need longer than four (4) years to graduate from high school, and that it is important to recognize the accomplishment regardless of the time it takes, the Department (and ESE) calculates a five-year graduation rate.

	DCF Target	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Four-Year Graduation Rate	≥ 67.0%	52.0%	50.3%	54.5%	54.0%	51.4%	57.3%	63.4%	55.6%
Five-Year Graduation Rate		62.8%	53.0%	62.4%	59.1%	54.4%	58.2%	66.4%	

While the Four-Year Graduation Rates between academic years 2011 and 2018 are below the established target, extending the timeframe to graduation by one (1) year results in an additional 5% of cohort students receiving acknowledgment for graduating (e.g., 10.8% in 2011; 3.0% in 2017). Of note, the Four-Year Graduation Rate increased by 6.9% between 2011 and 2018.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Competency Determination Rates

MCAS is designed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act of 1993. This law specifies that the testing program must:

- Test all public school students in Massachusetts, including students with disabilities and English Language Learner students;
- Measure performance based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework learning standards; and
- Report on the performance of individual students, schools, and districts.

As required by state law—in addition to fulfilling local requirements—students must demonstrate competency (score of proficient or higher) on the grade 10 tests in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and one of the four Science and Technology Engineering tests as one condition of eligibility for a high school diploma. Recognizing the importance of this metric, the Department tracks MCAS Competency Determination Rates for students in its custody utilizing an automated data exchange with ESE.

	DCF Target	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
^MCAS Competency Determination Rate	≥ 40.0%	26.9%	38.3%	36.0%	32.8%	37.7%	37.1%	45.1%	41.2%
ELA – proficient or higher		47.3%	63.7%	68.2%	58.7%	67.2%	66.8%	68.1%	64.3%

Mathematics – proficient or higher	32.9%	42.5%	43.0%	33.1%	40.3%	35.0%	42.7%	40.0%
*Science/Tech./Eng. – proficient or higher	-	76.6%	78.9%	67.4%	74.7%	76.2%	81.5%	77.6%

[^]MCAS Competency Determination Rate: Denominator is now limited to children who have taken EACH of the 3 MCAS subtests.

*Science and Technology/Engineering subject area was adopted in academic year 2012.

Data Source: MA data exchange between DCF and ESE

Breaking a multiyear trend of underperformance, MCAS Competency Determination rates for children in the custody of DCF in academic years 2017 and 2018 are above DCF's established target. Performance on the Science/Technology/Engineering tests consistently exceed that of English Language Arts and especially Mathematics. Of note, MCAS Competency Determination is challenged by the significantly lower performance on the Mathematics test.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children Receive Adequate Services to Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 67% of the 55 applicable cases reviewed. The outcome was substantially achieved in 68% of the 40 applicable foster care cases, 64% of the applicable 14 in-home services cases, and 100% of the applicable 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.
- New Challenges: N/A

Well-Being Outcome 3 – Item 17: Physical Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 85% of the 47 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. Item 17 was rated as Strength in 85% of the 40 foster care cases, 83% of the 6 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 17 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 84.9% of 53 applicable cases. This represents a 0.1% decrease in performance relative to 2015 CFSR3 results. The Department is working to address the physical health (including dental) needs of the children in its care.
- Item 17 Adjusted PIP Goal: NONE ESTABLISHED
- Item 17 PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018): 91.1% – though not a PIP item, performance represents a significant 7.3% improvement over baseline—and moving toward an area of strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Well-Being Outcome 3 – Item 18: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 62% of the 37 applicable cases were rated as a Strength. Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 62% of the 26 applicable foster care cases, 60% of the 10 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- Item 18 PIP Baseline Performance (Jul-Dec 2017): A Strength rating was evidenced for 69.0% of 42 applicable cases. This represents a significant 11.3% improvement over 2015 CFSR3 results.
- Item 18 Adjusted PIP Goal: NONE ESTABLISHED
- Item 18 PIP Review Quarters 3&4 Performance (Jul-Dec 2018): 75.7% – though not a PIP item, performance represents a significant 9.7% improvement over baseline.
- New Challenges: N/A

Assessment of Systemic Factors

Systemic Factor Item 19: Statewide Information System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The statewide information system is functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Case Review System

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. One of the 5 items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Case Review System – Item 20: Written Case Plan

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described the state's policies for case plan development and provided data on service plan completion. In interviews, stakeholders reported that joint development of the case plan with parents is inconsistent and that plans are often developed without input from the parents and presented to them.

The Department has implemented a new Family Assessment and Action Planning policy which promotes/supports the development of a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions. Fidelity metrics have been developed to assess performance.

- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Case Review System – Item 21: Periodic Reviews

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews indicated that periodic reviews occur largely on time and as required. Delays may occur on occasion to accommodate parents or, in a limited number of geographic areas, as a result of significant increases in the foster care population. While recognized as a strength, the Department is working on SACWIS improvements which will support periodic review for each child in care.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Case Review System – Item 22: Permanency Hearings

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. In the statewide assessment, the Department provided information on the requirements for permanency hearings and the process for monitoring timeliness. Data from the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews indicated that permanency hearings were not held timely in many cases.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Case Review System – Item 23: Termination of Parental Rights

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. In the statewide assessment, the Department provided data focused on the scheduling of termination of parental rights hearings and resolving issues related to scheduling of these hearings. During the onsite review, results indicated that for one-third of the children who had been in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the required provisions for filing of termination of parental rights or documentation of a compelling reason had not occurred. Although stakeholders largely believed that filing was occurring timely, case review information collected during the CFSR review did not support this. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.

- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Case Review System – Item 24: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

- Status: The Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. In the statewide assessment, the Department described challenges in ensuring that caregivers of children in foster care are notified of and have a right to be heard in any review or hearing. Stakeholders reported that caregivers are typically notified of and invited to attend reviews and hearings by caseworkers or by written notice. Under Massachusetts law, caregivers are not considered a party to the case and as a result, each court treats caregivers differently, varying in involvement with some caregivers sworn in to provide testimony; other times caregivers are not considered for input.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor Item 25: Quality Assurance System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described several components of the state's continuous quality improvement (CQI) system but was unable to demonstrate the integration of these components. The state's past qualitative reviews were ad hoc in nature and did not provide the state with information about the quality of its services and the strengths and needs of its service delivery system. Stakeholders confirmed that a functioning and integrated quality assurance system that uses data and information to inform practice changes or monitor performance is not yet in place.

The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance. Toward this end, the Department has established a formal quality assurance system which is functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Staff and Provider Training

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Staff and Provider Training – Item 26: Initial Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. In the statewide assessment, the Department provided information on initial staff training for new workers including classroom-based, on-the-job, and in-service trainings, and the state's Web-based learning management system. During interviews, stakeholders were concerned that the training did not prepare staff to perform their job functions and that the state lacked methods to evaluate the effectiveness of this training. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Staff and Provider Training – Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders indicated that the state requires 30 hours of ongoing training annually; however, the state does not have training requirements for supervisors. The state offers professional development to supervisors, and in-house and topically based training to all workers. Stakeholders reported concerns with tracking staff participation in and completion of ongoing training as well as with the evaluation of ongoing training.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Staff and Provider Training – Item 28: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state-licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders indicated that foster and adoptive parents complete initial and ongoing training and that training is effective in providing them with the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children. However, the state did not provide information to demonstrate whether staff of child care institutions receive training that effectively prepares them to carry out their duties.

- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Service Array and Resource Development

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Service Array and Resource Development – Item 29: Array of Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment and obtained through interviews with stakeholders indicated that there are significant waiting lists for many services, and some services are unavailable in the more rural areas of the state or in the suburbs. In particular, stakeholders identified significant gaps for children and families, which include access to transportation services, independent living housing for older youth, and services for cognitively impaired parents. Stakeholders also identified long wait lists for intensive foster care homes, child psychological evaluation and treatment, substance abuse treatment services, and trauma-informed services. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Service Array and Resource Development – Item 30: Individualizing Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. In the statewide assessment, the Department described the agency's ability to purchase services that could be individualized for the child and family. During interviews, stakeholders clarified that practice is inconsistent and depends on the caseworker's level of involvement in crafting such services. Stakeholders also asserted that individualization is difficult for persons who are non-English speaking or those with cognitive disabilities.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Agency Responsiveness to the Community

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. One item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Agency Responsiveness to the Community – Item 31: State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family- serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with some stakeholders described the ongoing engagement and consultation with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders and Tribes. However, the state did not demonstrate how information was considered in developing the CFSP, and other stakeholders described challenges in ongoing and routine engagement of attorneys for parents, Tribes, and law enforcement.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Agency Responsiveness to the Community – Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family- serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment. In the statewide assessment, the Department described how the state coordinated federally funded services and collaborated with other agencies receiving federal funds/grants. The state presented examples of how these collaborations were supporting children and families.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. None of the four items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention – Item 33: Standards Applied Equally

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment. In the statewide assessment, the Department described the state policies and processes for applying licensing standards at initial licensing and at reevaluation. Stakeholders reported that there were inconsistencies in how the standards are applied, particularly in the use of waivers for unrestricted family homes.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention – Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment. Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders provided information on the state's policy requiring foster and adoptive parents to complete criminal background checks prior to licensing. However, no data or information in the statewide assessment or obtained from stakeholders during interviews demonstrated that the policy was being implemented consistently statewide. The state was unable to provide data or information concerning provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.
- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention – Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment. In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described general recruitment efforts including the quarterly comparison of the race and ethnicity of resource caregivers with the population of children in need of care. The state did not provide data or information in the statewide assessment to demonstrate that the state's approach to diligent recruitment was adjusted based on data or that there was a functioning statewide recruitment plan. Stakeholders were also unable to provide this data or information. The MA CFSR3 PIP includes targeted strategies and activities which are anticipated to improve performance.

- New Challenges: N/A

Systemic Factor: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention – Item 36: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

- Status: As evidenced in the 2015 CFSR3, the Department received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment. In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described its partnership with the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange and its ability to access nationwide pre-adoptive resources through AdoptUSKids. Data in the statewide assessment documented that although timeliness has improved, a sizeable number of home studies requested by other states in order to place a child in a Massachusetts home are delayed beyond 60 days. Stakeholder interviews confirmed this information and reported that little information is available on the effectiveness of the state's use of cross-jurisdictional placements.
- New Challenges: N/A

UPDATE TO THE PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT AND PROGRESS MADE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

In September 2015, based on the recommendations outlined in the 2014 CWLA Quality Improvement Review, the Department of Children and Families, with the support of Governor Baker and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, embarked on extensive initiatives to improve child safety and strengthen the capacity of the agency. The report's recommendations provided a blueprint for the Department to follow on its path to reform and laid out initiatives for the Department to put into action in the years ahead. Ever since, the Department has been focused on implementing the report's recommendations. In essence, the report became the foundation of the Department's Strategic Plan for the near future.

The CWLA report focused its recommendations on:

- increasing social worker staff to reduce caseloads and achieve the caseload standards of 15 families per worker;
- updating Department policies such as case transfers, children missing from care, and background record checks, among others, and ensuring staff are appropriately trained on the policies;
- reviewing, strengthening and then re-launching the Department's case practice model;
- ensuring social worker staff are adequately trained and licensed;
- decoupling the area office "pairings", the management structure which has one area director managing two area offices;
- expanding Department's system of regional offices from the current four;
- adding specialty staff to area offices with expertise on the issues of substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health; and
- increasing medical staff supports to area offices by adding pediatric nurse practitioners and hiring a full-time Medical Director.

On the following pages, we provide the full list of recommendations and the current status/timeline of each of the original CWLA recommendations, identified by the tag " (CWLA)." In addition, we provide status updates on the Department's progress toward other initiatives undertaken more recently.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Recommendations	Status/ Timeline	Comments
Revise policies, practice guidelines, website, and written materials to consistently communicate agency's primary responsibility to protect children. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	New mission and vision statement created and posted. All policy revisions reiterate primary focus on safety first (Case Transfer, Background Record Check, Protective Intake, Supervision, Family Assessment and Action Planning).
Revamp and reorganize DCF website to provide current and comprehensive information to external stakeholder.	FY16-17 Complete	The Department revised its website to include user-friendly, stakeholder information about: the Department's services, locations, regulations, and policies; filing reports of abuse or neglect; requesting records; contacting the Office of the Ombudsman; seeking employment with the Department; and, becoming a foster or adoptive parent. Prospective foster parents and adopters may submit applications online or by mail. https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-children-families https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-to-become-a-dcf-foster-parent
Revamp and reorganize DCF intranet to provide current and comprehensive information to DCF staff on current events, policies and procedures and promote internal communication.	FY16 Complete	New DCF Social Intranet launched statewide. Allows for greater communication across the organization. One particular feature of new intranet is that it allows staff for the first time to access DCF policies via their iPads.
Reinstate DCF Newsletter to provide current and up-to-date information on progress on Department reforms and current initiatives.	FY16-18 Ongoing	The Department sends periodic newsletters to all staff to provide progress updates. The Commissioner and Leadership Team post important information on the Department's Intranet, to which all staff have access. Micro e-learning have been added to the Intranet to address frequently asked questions regarding IT changes and policy roll-outs.
Initiate Foster Care Campaign to increase the availability and retention of foster families.	FY16-18 Complete	The Department developed a revised business process for recruitment and hired 15 foster care recruitment staff. A contracted vendor assisted with branding and a media campaign that resulted in production of recruitment videos, posters, and public displays. A Department Facebook page is host to recruitment event notices and posts of interest to current and prospective foster/adoptive families.
MA media outlets undertake public education campaign to raise awareness of each individual's responsibility to protect children from abuse and neglect and to uphold the rights of children. (CWLA)	FY 16 - 19	Strengthening DCF's approach to working with the media began with implementation of new policies. This included press conferences and availabilities for the Governor, Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Commissioner to brief the press and public on the agency's renewed focus on child safety and permanence, and on activities to strengthen agency capacity.
Increase community engagement in educating the public on unsafe sleep for infants. (CWLA)	FY15 & Ongoing	The Department's Medical Director continues to work with the Department of Public Health to design and launch a new <i>Safe Sleep</i> campaign. The interagency group is working to develop and produce updated brochures and other printed materials, as well as public service announcements to promote safe sleep practices and reduce child fatalities from unsafe sleep. The Department includes safe sleep training in its curricula for training foster parent and kinship parents. Safe sleep awareness and practices are

		being integrated into the Department's revised training for new Social Workers.
Increase active engagement of children, youth, families, leadership, and workforce in determining and responding to needs within communities. (CWLA)	FY15 & Ongoing	The Department has active Family, Youth, and Provider advisory groups as well as local Area Boards. The Department continues to work with each of these Boards and groups to respond to community needs and strengthen working relationships. Youth, family, and staff with lived-experience participated in panel presentations for managers at statewide meetings. Family voice is an important component of AILT process and teams.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Recommendations	Status/ Timeline	Comments
Maximize Staff and Work Place Safety	FY16-17 & Ongoing	The Department holds bi-annual safety conferences. The Department has created safe workplace sign and placed them in all area offices. The Department also invested in an emergency alert system that contacts staff via text, telephone, and/or e-mail to alert of an emergency. In addition, the Massachusetts State Police have been conducting "lock-down" trainings and drills with DCF area offices to educate staff on proper procedure to maintain safety in the event of an attack on an office.
Strengthen clarity of Practice Model, address related dissent among managers and staff, and reduce inconsistencies in implementation. (CWLA)	FY16-19	The Department is developing new Principles of Practice to guide all future policy and practice development. This was included as a strategy in the most recent CFSR PIP. First Principles of Practice initial draft is guiding current AILT work. DCF will revise based on feedback from AILT teams.
Establish consistent expectations and protocols for management and clinical case reviews including when they are initiated, who attends, how they are conducted, and how information is synthesized, documented and shared to inform case direction/decision-making and system improvement.	FY16-18	Included in Protective Intake and Supervision and Family Assessment and Action Planning (FAAP) policies (implemented); Revision of 6-week Reviews and Permanency Planning Conferences is a primary focus of current AILT teams. Result will be standard approaches to meetings (attendance, process, and desired outcomes) with emphasis on making decisions in the best interests of children.
Develop a plan to ensure that staff at each level of leadership has the necessary competencies. (CWLA)	FY17 - 19	<p>The Department's Child Welfare Institute (CWI) is partnering with the Capacity Building Center for States (The Center) to co-create an Intensive Project to develop and pilot a leadership framework for DCF's leaders. The Department began working with the Capacity Building Center for States (CBCS) in FY'18. To date, The Center has completed an assessment of the Department's capacity.</p> <p>Together, the CWI and The Center will develop and pilot competencies for leadership professional development, integrate policy into training, ensure critical thinking skills and coaching principles are embedded in the current training provided to newly hired leaders.</p> <p>DCF's Agency Improvement Leadership Team process continues to model leadership competencies for Central Office, Regional, and Area Office leaders.</p> <p>CWI continues to develop new trainings for managers and supervisors.</p>

<p>Cultivate a positive culture and climate in which accountability, communication, responsiveness, and commitment to improvement are valued and rewarded. (CWLA)</p>	<p>FY16-18 Ongoing</p>	<p>DCF's CQI unit has been staffed and CQI plan implemented. At weekly AILT meetings, the Assistant Commissioner of Continuous Quality Improvement presents weekly metrics. Weekly metrics reports drive decision-making and promote critical thinking among the leadership team. During FY 18, a first cohort of more than 80 Department staff participated in the inaugural Data Fellows program, during which they completed nine data-driven projects responsive to specific needs of Area and Regional Offices. The weekly metrics presentations and the Data Fellows program have contributed significantly to creating a positive climate, valuing accountability, and rewarding CQI activity. A second cohort of Data Fellows has completed projects, contributing to the increasing emphasis on improvement and accountability.</p>
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POLICY AND PRACTICE

Recommendations	Status/ Timeline	Comments
Visits and Contacts with Children and Families		
Develop visit protocols to assist SWs with quality contacts and engagement in home visits. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	Developed and issued to all staff: <i>A Field Guide for Social Workers: Quality Visits and Contacts with Families.</i>
Implement statewide mandatory mechanism for real-time data entry for visits to children, families, and foster/adoptive/kinship homes; Enforce expectation on documentation of visits/contacts within 30 days after contact. (CWLA)	FY15-19	iPads now issued as standard equipment to all field staff to enable real-time data entry and a dashboard is available to staff on status of visits/children needing to be seen. Revisions to <i>In-Home Casework Policy</i> are in process.
Transfer of Cases		
Revise Case Transfer Policy to require face-to-face meetings among staff for case transfers. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	New Policy in effect as of March 2015.
Background Checks		
Develop, revise and promulgate regulations to ensure foster/adoptive parent applicants and kinship resources are appropriately assessed. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	Implemented through revised policy and procedures.
Revise regulations to create approval processes, rather than waiver or variance, for kinship and foster/adoptive caregivers (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	Implemented through revised policy and procedures.
Review all child placements in homes approved through background check waiver, to identify those for heightened case monitoring, home visitation, supervision, or case oversight. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	Intense one time review of all waivers conducted in FY2015.
Revise regulations & standards to require results of background check with conviction of certain felonies to exclude eligibility as a foster/adoptive parent, or kinship provider; Require outside screening for certain offenses. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	Implemented through revised policy and procedures.
Ensure compliance with current policy relative to retaining all records of any criminal background checks for applicants for foster care, adoption, or kinship care. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	Adherence to policy affirmed.
Executive branch and legislature consider ramifications of changes to background checks on foster and kinship resources. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	Discussed as part of implementation of policy and procedural changes.
Regulations and standards updated to identify qualities and characteristics needed and the minimum requirements that must be evident in the home—align with standards developed by ABA, NARA, GU and Annie E. Casey Foundation; limit waivers to non-safety standard. (CWLA)	FY17 Complete	New approval process completed incorporating recommended standards. IT system updates to support new process implemented in September 2016.

Missing Children and Runaways		
Require digital photo of each child who enters the care and custody of the Department; updated every 6 months. (CWLA)	FY15 & Ongoing	Required for children at case transfer and for all children placed in a contracted placement; planned requirement for all children in DCF care or custody.
Revise runaway and missing child procedures to include age appropriate variables, procedures for search, procedures for notification of law enforcement, and for initiating Amber Alert protocols. Develop assessment on vulnerabilities that place a child at heightened risk for running away. (CWLA)	FY16-17 Complete	<i>Policy on Responding to Children Missing from DCF Care and Custody</i> was finalized and negotiated and implemented in September 2016. The Department has revised the Policy for Children who are Missing or Absent in response to feedback after the first year of implementation. The revised policy includes procedures for prevention, includes all children involved with the Department (not limited to those in care or custody), and transitions from assessing risk level to assessing immediate danger when a child is missing or absent.
Initiate Business Process Redesign to merge “siloe” programs and resources dedicated to preventing, locating and returning runaway and children missing from DCF Care and Custody.	FY16-17 & On-going	Runaway Assistance Program from EOHHS has been merged with DCF resources and programs.
Case Practice Model/Principles of Practice		
Practice Model refined to clearly reflect rights of children and priority on child safety; Define the practice model by clarifying the desired elements: Practice Principles and skills and competencies that reflect the agency’s mission/vision, and alignment with DCF policy requirements. (CWLA) MA CFSR PIP Goal 1: MA DCF will develop and implement Principles of Practice that will guide child welfare practice, increase family engagement and the involvement of communities, providers, and other agencies, with the intended outcome that children of the Commonwealth will be safer, will experience improvements in permanency, and that their wellbeing will be improved. MA DCF will use the strategies outlined within Goal 1 to increase family engagement and the involvement of communities, providers, and other agencies with the intended outcome that children of the Commonwealth will be safer and that their well-being and permanency will be improved.	FY15-19	The Department is building new Principles of Practice to guide all future policy and practice development. This was included as a strategy in the recently submitted CFSR PIP. MA CFSR PIP Goal 1 – Strategy 1: Complete Principles of Practice Document for MA DCF, using the Core Principles of the CWLA National Blueprint for Excellence in Child Welfare (CWLA Press, April, 2013) as the essential elements. The MA DCF Principles of Practice will reflect the agency’s mission/vision, and will provide the foundation for consistent practice within the Department and in its contracted programs. DCF will use the eight Core Principles of the CWLA National Blueprint as the framework for development of the MA DCF Principles of Practice. They address: Rights of Children; Shared Responsibility and Leadership; Engagement/ Participation; Supports and Services; Quality Improvement; Workforce; Race, Ethnicity, and Culture; and, Funding and Resources. The Principles of Practice initial draft is guiding the work of current Agency Improvement Leadership Teams (AILT).
Involve DCF staff from every level of the organization, including representatives from SEIU Local 509 and parents, in redefining and rebuilding the case practice model. (FY15)	FY15 Complete	SEIU and parent representatives on Steering Committee.
Consolidate and clarify multiple/conflicting directives and guidance documents related to provide clear direction and expectation for screening and responding to reports of abuse and neglect (e.g., Protective Intake policy). (New)	FY16 Complete	Addressed in new Protective Intake Policy implemented in February 2016.
Ensure practice model guides and supports all child protective and preventive work in by all parties: DCF, lead agencies, and community-based providers; Revise training modules for the ICPM. (CWLA)	FY16-19	Principles of Practice will be developed in FY’19. New practice principles will be incorporated into all internal training, shared with stakeholders and incorporated into contracting for services. First Draft of Principles of Practice completed; guiding current work of AILT teams.

Revise DCF Policies to align with Practice Model values, principles and skills (e.g., Family Assessment and Action Planning, Case Closing, etc.).	FY16-19	All newly revised policies will align with Principles of Practice.
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MA CFSR PIP Goal 2: Increase permanency and stability of child placements through strengthening family resource programs and services. DCF intends to adopt an integrated recruitment and support system, which connects its approach to recruitment, response, training, development, and support of foster, adoptive, and kinship families. This integrated approach will be based on shared data to inform the planning and implementation of each part of the process and will have well-established feedback loops so that each of the activities – recruitment, preparation and training, licensing, and support – is shaped by lessons learned from all parts of the work. This effort will occur in concert with DCF’s development of its CQI model and program, and will integrate both currently available data and data eventually available as the CQI program expands and grows.

In-Home Safety		
Develop protocols for evaluating risks to children living at home, including risks from household members who are not the child’s parents. SDM tool to be used consistently. (CWLA)	FY16 – 19	The Department’s vendor has completed a validation study of the Department’s Risk Assessment tool. The tool has been revised based on the validation study findings. All staff will be trained and the revised toll will be implemented in FY’19.
Child Care/Early Education		
With EEC, revise standard on discontinuing child care due to excessive absences. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	Implemented through procedural change to ensure continuity of care.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Recommendations	Status/ Timeline	Comments
<p>Develop a plan for establishing a robust quality improvement system using Council on Accreditation’s (COA) public agency standards for Performance and Quality Improvement (PQI). (CWLA)</p> <p>MA CFSR PIP Goal 3: Develop a robust CQI Program. The ACYF-CB-IM-12-07 information memorandum on Establishing and Maintaining Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Systems in State Child Welfare Agencies will inform the development of DCF’s CQI system. The Department’s CQI approach will better equip DCF to measure the quality of services provided in Massachusetts by determining the impact those services have on child and family level outcomes and functioning, and the effectiveness of processes and systems in operation statewide. A robust CQI program will function statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.</p>	FY16-19	The Department has established a fully-staffed quality improvement program that is has primary responsibility for monitoring performance on outcome measures, using metrics to evaluate performance and fidelity to Department policies and practices, and conducting case record reviews.
Initiate discussions with MA institution(s) of higher learning to partner with them to evaluate the Practice Model. (CWLA)	FY18	The development of Practice Principles has replaced DCF’s plans for revision of a practice model. Institutions of higher learning are among the stakeholders involved in development of the Principles of Practice.

Explore data management and display tools to make management data visible, transparent and easy to use by DCF managers and other stakeholders.	FY16-17 Complete	New management data reports have been created and implemented focusing on specific metrics relevant to area office managers. Reports are designed with easy-to-understand charts and graphs to facilitate review and understanding by managers.
Implement mechanisms for soliciting and considering feedback from children, youth, families, partners, collaborators, etc. on a regular basis. (CWLA)	FY15-19	Parent/Guardian Satisfaction survey completed twice. CQI team is exploring modification and simplification of parent/guardian survey process. Surveys are distributed annually to Youth in transition (aging out).
Establish outcome measures that are clearly articulated, measurable and regularly published. (CWLA)	FY16-18 Complete	Dashboard of key measures for internal publication implemented in January 2016; Program Improvement Plan (PIP) completed and submitted in Fall of 2016 as result of CFSR review in fall of 2015.
Make QI process transparent to youth, families, providers and the public. (CWLA)	FY16-17 Complete	Dashboard of key measures for internal publication implemented as of January 2016.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

Recommendations	Status/ Timeline	Comments
Hire Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP) in each Area Office and a Medical Director. Area Office PNP responsible for reviewing, within 24-hours, significant medical information for the child. PNPs should rotate responsibility for coverage on weekends and holidays. (CWLA)	FY16-17 Complete	Medical Director (MD) hired as of 1.1.2016. Consulting Psychiatrist and 1 RN per region also hired. Hiring 1 Medical Social Worker per Area Office (29 out of 29 completed).
Establish protocols for Social Workers and other DCF staff on when/how to seek medical consultations on DCF cases.	FY16 Complete	Included in Supervision Policy.
Conduct statewide training for DCF staff (social workers and supervisors) on Healthy Child Development and signs of medical neglect.	FY16-18 Complete	Plan to include in next round of clinical training in Fall 2018.
Establish an “expert panel” to provide support and consultation to DCF staff and medical personnel in difficult cases. (CWLA)	FY16-17 Complete	Priority task for Medical Director, who currently facilitates access to specialty consultation on medical complex cases.
SW of record at the time the child enters the care of DCF should have direct contact with the PNP to report what is known about the child’s current status. (CWLA)	FY16-17 Complete	Medical Social Workers and DCF nurse work with social workers to ensure that necessary assessments are conducted.
Establish a triage protocol for determining the urgency of screening and comprehensive exams/well-child visits and ensuring visits. (CWLA)	FY16-17 Complete	Priority Task for Medical Director; recommendations developed by working group.
Undertake statewide effort to educate staff and doctors at hospitals, medical offices, and community health centers to assure that requested information is made available quickly and efficiently. (CWLA)	FY16-18 Complete	Priority Task for Medical Director, who has begun outreach to hospitals and facilities that treatment and assess children involved with DCF.

WORKFORCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations	Status/ Timeline	Comments
Licensure and Training		
Legislature amend M.G.L. c. 112, § 131 and 134 to eliminate DCF staff's exemption from social work licensing requirements. All clinical staff licensed in social work or in a related field. (CWLA)	FY15 & Ongoing	Chapter 165 of Acts of 2014 required all DCF social workers to be licensed within 9 months of hire; As of May 2019 (latest available data) 100% of staff are licensed; support for license preparation is available for new and current social workers; new social workers are encouraged to apply for licensure during their orientation with the Department.
MA legislature amend M.G.L. c. 112, § 131 and 134 to eliminate DCF staff's exemption from continuing education and professional licensing requirements. All clinical staff required to meet continuing education standards. (CWLA)	FY15 & Ongoing	Chapter 165 of Acts of 2014 required all DCF social workers to attend 30 hours of training/year; Child Welfare Institute increased availability of in-service trainings to support attainment of new training requirements; tracking of training hours set up through PACE.
Establish standards for training and continuing education for all staff that are consistent with social work licensing requirements. (CWLA)	FY15 Complete	New requirements exceed this standard.
Increase opportunities for staff to participate in cross-training with sister agencies, community providers, and collaborative organizations. (CWLA)	FY15 & Ongoing	Mental health and substance use cross-training initiated with Department of Public Health in FY17. Additional cross agency training available through the Department of Youth Services, and the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
Professional development plans for each DCF employee as part of an annual performance evaluation. (CWLA)	FY15 & Ongoing	Existing annual performance evaluation processes include professional development goals.
Trauma-informed Approaches & Secondary Trauma		
All staff to have competency-based training in trauma-informed approaches. (CWLA)	FY15-17 Complete	In 2016, DCF received 1-year extension to 5-year federal grant (Massachusetts Child Trauma Project) – training provider agencies, DCF staff and foster parents on trauma-informed care for DCF involved children and families. During the five years of MCTP, the child welfare system achieved a greater awareness about the impact of trauma, not only in relation to child trauma, but also trauma experienced by parents and staff. DCF incorporated information about trauma in numerous policy and practice guides and has also been paying increased attention to the well-being of staff. The DCF Protective Intake Policy was implemented in February 2016, and DCF launch its new Family Assessment and Action Planning policy in February 2017. Both of these policies require that workers assess parental capacities utilizing the Protective Factors Framework and respond to specific questions under each of the Protective Factors that assess areas potentially impacted by trauma.

		<p>The Child Welfare Institute is offering DCF staff competency-based trauma informed approaches through in-service courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Children Who Have Experienced Trauma – This practical workshop examines trauma and helps look “under the iceberg” to see what is fueling children’s behavior. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) curriculum will be presented to provide skills necessary to respond appropriately to behavioral and emotional challenges of traumatized children. • Childhood Trauma – Integrating Critical Thinking Skills – An overview of the 12 core concepts of traumatic stress will be explored and applied to case examples through the use of critical thinking lens. A case conceptualization framework will be reviewed to increase participant’s capacity to present cases.
Each Area Office to establish a secondary trauma support team. (CWLA)	FY15-17 & Ongoing	<p>Area Offices have established Trauma Informed Leadership Teams (TILT), Wellness Committees and/or Staff Safety Committees. Trauma Informed Leadership Teams (TILTs) that successfully launched in Area Offices maintained the focus on enhancing trauma informed practices and are poised to continue beyond the grant period. DCF managers and supervisors have taken on leadership of TILTs as a part of their ongoing work responsibilities. They are very aware of the benefits of a trauma informed approach and remain passionate and dedicated to integrating this approach throughout their office. There have been very strong partnerships that have developed among DCF and community partners on TILTs and participants have expressed commitment to continuing their collaboration.</p> <p>In addition to the TILT teams, Area Offices have developed an incident de-brief process for staff. These de-briefs are not just fatality or critical-incident related, but also includes difficult removals and worker safety situations. These efforts are but one of many tools that serve to enhance our worker retention efforts.</p> <p>The Central Office Incident Notification (COIN) form and process have been revised to include identification of steps taken to assist staff affected by critical incidents. Every month the Regional Clinical Directors (RCDs) join the COIN team in reviewing fatalities. Issues of secondary stress and trauma-focused work are often discussed including the Area Office’s efforts to de-brief/support social workers involved, and connect them to the Massachusetts Employee Assistance Program (EAP).</p>
DCF staff, placement resources, judges, court personnel, and CASA to receive training in trauma-informed services. (CWLA)	FY15-18	<p>(See Trauma Grant above); Will require work with others to reach external parties.</p> <p>The Child Welfare Institute is offering DCF staff competency-based trauma informed approaches through in-service courses.</p>

		<p>Spring, 2014, MA Child Trauma Project, offered a 12-hour training program to resource families across the commonwealth.</p> <p>MSPCC/KidsNet, through a contract w/DCF, provides supportive services to resource families. Included in this contract is a training component. Current schedule September, 2017-January, 2018 trainings are offered throughout the commonwealth. Included are trainings specific to trauma. Each calendar of training includes a session on trauma training. August, 2016, work began to update the MAPP curriculum utilized to train our foster/pre-adoptive applicants, the updates included trauma training.</p> <p>Department leadership attended a workshop by Harvard Center on the Developing Child staff in May, 2018 including recent research on the effects of trauma on child/brain development and implications for child welfare policy and practice. DCF continues discussions with the Center on the Developing Child to infuse our work with current research findings.</p>
Develop protocol for all contracted providers for trauma-informed engagement. (CWLA)	FY15 & Ongoing	With DMH implemented contract standards on trauma-informed care and in 8th year of initiative on reducing use of coercive behavior management techniques.

Supervision		
Each DCF employee has regularly scheduled supervision -- establish and enforce baseline expectations for the provision of scheduled, dedicated time for supervision for each individual. (CWLA)	FY15-16 Complete	New Supervision Policy finalized as of 11.17.2015 and implemented in Spring 2016.
Ensure Supervisors and Managers have supervisory training, current performance evaluation, and demonstrate the competencies required for their respective positions. (CWLA)	FY16-18 & Ongoing	Provided as part of training curriculum on Supervision Policy implementation. (See page 3 section on Leadership – CWI’s work with The Center.

STAFFING, CASELOADS AND OTHER RESOURCES NEEDED

Recommendations	Status/ Timeline	Comments
Area Office Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Area Director and ACM for each Area Office (CWLA) <input type="checkbox"/> APMs to support a ratio of 1:4 (CWLA) <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient social worker and supervisory personnel to comply CWLA Caseload recommendations (CWLA) <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Social Worker in each Area Office (CWLA) <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative support for Area Offices 	FY16-19	Area Office Staffing updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of June 2017, all area offices have a dedicated Area Director and Area Clinical Manager. • The Department has hired Area Program Managers to support a ratio of 1:4. • 29 of 29 Medical Social Workers have been hired • Since September 2015, the Department has hired more than 800 [exactly 809 as of April 13th] new employees to address the critical infrastructure needed to run the agency (a 24% increase since Sept. 2015), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 300 front line social workers (a 12% increase, for a total of 25488 front line social workers) o 92 supervisors (a 20% increase, for a total of 541) o 115 managers (a 60% increase, for a total of 307) o 95 social worker technicians (% increase is n/a as there were 0 FTEs in Sept. 2015) • Staff have been hired to restore appropriate administrative staffing ratios for area offices
Regional Office Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 5.0 FTEs for CQI (CWLA) <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration of 6 regions and 6 regional offices (CWLA) <input type="checkbox"/> Backfill Boston RN, additional RN for each Region (CWLA) <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Clinical specialist in DV, SA and MH for each Region (CWLA) 	FY16-18 Complete	Regional Office Staffing updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CQI hires complete • DCF has restored 5 regions • An RN for each region has been hired • 2 additional Substance Abuse Specialists were hired during FY18. Domestic Violence, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Specialists now exceed CWLA recommendation.
Central Office Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2.0 FTE Policy Staff <input type="checkbox"/> 2.0 FTE for MCWI <input type="checkbox"/> Backfill key CO leadership positions in Foster Care, Programs and Planning, Hotline, Family and Community Engagement (Family Resource Centers) and Field Support. • Additional ERIP Backfills in key positions: Finance, Training, Family Resource Centers, Education, Foster Care Review, Ombudsman's Office, Hotline <input type="checkbox"/> Director of Continuous Quality Improvement 	FY15-17 Complete	Key Central Office positions have been hired.

Fair Hearings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.0 FTE Fair Hearing Officers • 1.0 FTE Fair Hearing Supervisor • 9.0 Paralegals (including 5 dedicated to reducing Fair Hearing Backlog) 	FY16-17 Complete	Fair Hearings staff have been hired
Assess fiscal and staffing needs within the MA Child Welfare Institute to support full implementation of/compliance with new laws on social worker licensing and ongoing training (30 hours/year).	FY16-17 Complete	MCWI staff hired to oversee and track Social Work licensure and training requirements.
DCF, DPH, lawmakers, substance abuse programs, and others to work together to increase funding for substance abuse programs, especially for parents and expectant parents. (CWLA)	FY16-18	<p>Training and outreach efforts underway in alignment with recommendations of Governor's Opioid Working Group. Addressing opioid misuse is a priority of the administration.</p> <p>DCF and DPH are working cooperatively to implement Plans of Safe Care. Community providers develop prenatal Plans of Safe Care; DCF develops Plans of Safe Care for families reported to DCF who do not have them.</p>
Enhance foster care recruitment and support safety for DCF involved children living at home by increasing funding for Supportive Child Care Program.	FY16-17 & Ongoing	<p>The Department developed a revised business process for recruitment and hired 15 foster care recruitment staff. A contracted vendor assisted with branding and a media campaign that resulted in production of recruitment videos, posters, and public displays. A Department Facebook page is host to recruitment event notices and posts of interest to current and prospective foster/adoptive families.</p> <p>As of March 2019, approximately 10,275 children were receiving subsidized childcare as part of their involvement with DCF. 7260 of these children receive their childcare through contracted slot at specific childcare providers; an additional 3015 children receive their care through vouchers which their caregivers can use at any participating childcare provider in the Commonwealth. Of the 10,275 children in child care, about 6900 are infant, toddlers and preschoolers. Access to vouchers for DCF children has allowed more.</p>

Update on Progress Made to Improve Outcomes

The CFSR PIP baseline for safety, permanency, and well-being measures was set in January 2018, based on cases reviewed in 2017, using the Department's established CQI case practice review system. APSR updates represent these measures, baselines, and subsequent case review results.

POPULATION AT GREATEST RISK OF MALTREATMENT

DCF has identified the following as Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

1. Youth Who Are Vulnerable to Human Trafficking
2. Infants and Children of Substance-Involved Parents
3. Children and Youth Exposed to Ongoing Issues of Mental Health, Domestic Violence, and Substance Abuse
4. Family coping with Homelessness
5. Children/Parents with Disabilities
6. Youth Transitioning from Foster Care

Youth Who Are Vulnerable to Human Trafficking

The Department continues to partner with My Life My Choice (MLMC) and the Suffolk County Support to End Exploitation Now (SEEN) on a federal five-year grant (concluding on 9/30/19) to address human trafficking in our child welfare system. This grant also focuses on the vulnerabilities of the LGBTQ and transgender populations within DCF through training and support to DCF staff, placement providers and the community. Multidisciplinary teams across the state are increasing their understanding of human trafficking and the unique risks that our LGBTQ and transgender youth experience. Additional funding from the state legislature has allowed DCF to offer additional training (SFY 2017) to ensure that staff identify these youth and respond appropriately.

As of December 2018 the work of the grant team met its goal of establishing multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) within each Children's Advocacy Center (CAC). These MDTs specifically addresses the issues of Human Trafficking with a core partnership consisting of the CAC MDT Coordinator, DCF and the county District Attorney. The CAC Coordinator manages the state's mandatory MDT response to allegations of human trafficking received by DCF.

Contracted placement providers for DCF have had opportunities to receive advanced training for leaders on creating a safe, effective and supportive environment for sexually exploited youth. Labor Trafficking Guides have been distributed to DCF staff, CACs and the community at large to raise awareness of this aspect of human trafficking. A training video, [A Foster Parent's Guide to Human Trafficking](#) with a companion Support Guide was developed by DCF and MLMC and rolled out in the fall of 2017. Throughout this period of time, additional training was provided to DCF staff and providers; Advanced Clinical Training/Human Trafficking, Prevention Curriculum for co-leaders of groups for girls, training that incorporated the production entitled [Body and Sold](#) with a panel discussion occurred for DCF staff and the community. The partnership between DCF management and their respective CACs has established a core group of dedicated specialists throughout the state in order to sustain attention and support the work related to human trafficking.

Infants and Children of Substance Involved Parents

Parental substance misuse continues to be a significant risk factor resulting in the maltreatment of children. Nationally and within Massachusetts, the opioid crisis continues to challenge communities and families due to parental overdoses, the birth of substance-exposed newborns/neonatal abstinence syndrome, and abuse and neglect.

DCF has continued to work in collaboration with statewide task forces and initiatives focused on parental substance misuse and the impact it has on children. DCF is a primary partner with the Institute of Health and Recovery in the Worcester County Family Recovery Project. There also continues to be strong

collaboration between DCF and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to address the needs of families impacted by the ongoing opioid crisis. This includes the expansion of home-based services to address parental substance misuse and trauma ,partnering on federal grants, improving access to resources and communication between systems, developing a statewide structure for Plans of Safe Care, identifying the needs of substance exposed newborns, identifying the needs of adolescents with co-occurring issues, and cross-systems training.

The DCF made a commitment to support area offices by increasing the capacity of its statewide Substance Abuse Unit. Through 2017-18 staff was increased from five to ten regional Substance Abuse Coordinators plus a central office coordinator. These Regional Coordinators provide case consultation to DCF social workers and work with community resources to improve access and communication. DCF Child Welfare Institute and the Substance Abuse Coordinators also provide a robust training calendar related to drug and alcohol issues along with other trainings that address how these issues co-occur with domestic violence, mental health and trauma. Additionally, DCF has made a commitment to systemically support this unit by creating a full time Director of Substance Misuse and is currently hiring for an additional six coordinator positions.

Children and Youth Exposed to Ongoing Issues of Mental Health, Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

DCF utilizes specialty units focused on all three of these areas in a variety of ways. The Mental Health Specialists Unit is comprised of one specialist for each of the five DCF statewide regions. They provide overall coordination of the regional mental health services utilized by DCF families with a focus on assisting staff to access the appropriate and timely treatment and disposition planning needs of the children placed in acute care settings. They additionally provide consultation to DCF staff in ongoing and emergent cases involving trauma and/or mental health concerns providing leadership in assisting the Department in advancing trauma-informed practice and understanding the impact trauma can have on children who have experienced abuse/neglect as well as on adult caretaker's ability to safely care for their children.

Domestic violence continues to be a significant risk factor for children and their non-offending parent both within child welfare and in communities. The DCF Statewide Domestic Violence Unit includes a Director, two supervisors and nine Domestic Violence Specialists placed regionally. This team provides consultation on dangerous and/or complicated cases involving domestic violence and trauma to assist staff in identifying risk and safety factors, assessing parental capacities, making recommendations and assisting in developing action plans to increase the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. They also participate as members of regional clinical teams and provide training in DCF area offices they cover working directly with the area and regional offices to think strategically about capacity building for staff. These activities inform a statewide perspective for the development of practice enhancements and training needs of DCF social workers in this area.

In a continuing statewide partnership, the DCF Domestic Violence Unit staff is working with the Department of Public Health (state funding of domestic violence programs) as a primary advisor in developing technical assistance for all domestic violence programs across the Commonwealth to address the unique needs of children and youth experiencing domestic violence and ensure a commitment to active engagement between local DCF Area Office and local domestic violence programs

During 2018, DCF was selected as one of three sites across the country to participate in a groundbreaking project funded by the U.S. Children's Bureau. The project will test an approach to improving outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system who are experiencing domestic violence. This project called the Quality Improvement Center on Domestic Violence in Child Welfare

(QIC-DVCW), will be working with the Haverhill, Lawrence, Lowell, and Malden Area DCF Offices and their community partners. MA DCF and these offices were selected due to a long-standing commitment to addressing this complex area of practice and because of a strong commitment and existing capacity of community partners.

In all policy development, DCF clinical units (domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental/behavioral health) have been utilized to incorporate clinical thinking and practice guidance related to these vulnerable populations. DCF's Intake Policy and Family Assessment and Action Plan Policy both include guidance related to parental and adolescent substance misuse. Staff from all three of these clinical units regularly collaborate on clinical case practice needs of regional and area offices and in the development of integrated trainings that include these topic areas as well as trauma informed practice.

Family Homelessness

DCF continues to expand our portfolio of services offered to families with issues of child maltreatment who are experiencing housing insecurity and or episodic homelessness. The three primary means of supporting families with housing insecurity are:

- Housing Stabilization Unit case consultation services;
- Strong interagency collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD);
- Collecting and evaluating housing specific data.

In 2016, the Department increased staffing levels to ensure each DCF region has an assigned Housing Stabilization Unit specialist and expanded the distribution of housing and economic self-sufficiency information through the creation of the Housing Services Unit intranet page. In an effort to increase service delivery to homeless families, the Department enhanced the Family Unification Program with the option for families to access supportive housing services. In Fiscal Year 2017, the Unit completed 1,954 case consultations on DCF involved families struggling with homelessness and housing insecurity. In an effort to raise awareness and increase the staffs' capacity to respond to families struggling with housing-related issues, the Unit collaborated with state partners and the Child Welfare Institute to develop housing specific curricula for the Department's field staff. These ongoing efforts include training related to economic self-sufficiency, approaches to servicing unaccompanied homeless youth and supporting families placed in state-funded shelter.

Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and DHCD was re-established in January 2015 to support the transition of children from foster care to reunification with parents in the state's shelter system. An expanded data collection effort assessed the number of children reunified through the collaboration DHCD and the success of families housed through the Family Unification Program; this data allows the Department to better assess the services delivery needs of families facing poverty and housing insecurity.

Children/Parents with Disabilities

The Department has continued to strengthen its efforts to serve children and parents with disabilities. A key goal of the Department's Diversity Plan is to increase DCF's capacity to provide culturally competent care and services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, persons with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities. The Department's Diversity Officer leads the implementation work, with support from many staff members. The strategies used to achieve this goal are:

- Implemented the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DCF and the MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) that creates a system for:
 - working collaboratively to serve children, youth, and families involved with both agencies;
 - resolving issues related to reasonable accommodations for families involved with DCF;
 - sharing information needed to implement reasonable accommodations;
 - providing on-going training for DCF and MCDHH staff on each agency's practices and policies and the needs of families served by each agency.
- Developed guidance documents on requesting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations.
- Securing a Language Line service; this is secured as of January 1, 2019.
- Numerous onboarding, ongoing, and professional development opportunities are provided by the Child Welfare Institute, DCF's training unit. Additionally, the Diversity Officer provides diversity, anti-discrimination, sexual harassment, and ADA trainings, both on a voluntary and remedial basis, to area offices and staff throughout the state and throughout the year.
- Partnerships with other agencies including Department of Mental Health, Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Commission for the Blind and MA Office on Disability.

Youth Transitioning from Foster Care

DCF understands the challenges and risks facing transition age youth/young adults and has developed an array of services to help prepare them with the skills and supports to successfully manage the struggles of adulthood. Using stakeholders' input, the agency has focused state and federal funded programming on assisting youth and young adults build strong foundations for success to help youth achieve permanency, safety and the many facets of well-being. Key goals for DCF youth include educational achievement and life skill attainment with permanent connections to family and/or other caring enduring relationships. DCF services for youth transitioning from care include foster care, congregate care and aftercare.

The Adolescent Outreach Program's strength-based approach provides intensive, individualized life skill assessment and training to transition age youth/young adults from across the state to assist them in developing necessary skills and supports to achieve their potential. Youth and young adults are encouraged to practice newly acquired skills and use problem-solving techniques within a safety net of adult supervision and support. The effective use of these skills and techniques allows youth to make decisions, achieve goals, and sometimes make mistakes and experience failure. Supporting youth through these good and bad times is the key to building resilience and realizing successful transitions.

Aligned with the Fostering Connections to Success and Achieving Adoptions Act of 2008, DCF's Permanency Planning Policy encourages permanency, sibling connections, and extended voluntary care for transition age youth to support their success. Pre-Service and ongoing training for DCF staff, foster parents and providers re-enforce these principles. Technical assistance is provided to area office staff and contracted providers to strengthen understanding and practice of the policy. DCF continues to serve children through its outreach and aftercare program. DCF is currently conducting a data review project to examine the permanency goals of an identified transition age youth cohort in out of home placement in the fall of 2017. The goal of this review is to assess the impact of services and programming on the well-being and permanency of these youth.

FY 2018 KINSHIP NAVIGATOR FUNDING (title IV-B, SUBPART 2)

DCF recognizes kinship caregivers and their families as the preferred path to promote stability and permanency for children who enter care. It is our first priority to identify kinship caregivers for initial placement. Approximately 50% of DCF's licensed foster homes are kinship or child-specific resources.

As the recipient of the title IV-B funding, DCF's goal will be to provide and expand coordinated services for all DCF, Probate/Family Court and informal kinship caregivers and their families. Our objective for this program is to increase stability and permanence of kinship families through advocacy and coordination of support services for all kinship caregivers.

The budget for this program has been finalized. Salaries and equipment have been budgeted for and all positions have been approved. We have identified four full-time positions for the Kinship Navigator Program:

- **Kinship Navigator Program Manager**
 - Position has been filled
 - Start Date: April 3, 2019
- **Kinship Coordinators**
 - 1.0 FTE hired with start date September 16, 2019
 - The hiring of the 2nd coordinator position was placed on hold during the 1st year of the Kinship Navigator program development (FF19 budget year)
- **Kinship Caregiver Helpline Liaison**
 - Interviews are in the process
 - Potential start date late October 2019

In reference to FFY 2018 Kinship Navigator Grant funds, the Departments plan to spend these funds on the following strategies:

1) Technology Support: The Kinship Navigator staff will be working remotely in the community. The use of mobile cell phones and tablets will always staff to connect to technology while actively building relationships in the communities. The Department plans to utilize a portion of FFY18 funds to purchase a limited number of flip phones and surface pros to support kinship caregivers throughout Massachusetts.

2) Design/Printing Services: The Department plans to utilize funds from this grant to support the design and printing of materials such as brochures, flyers, posters, retractable screens, journals and other program based items. The use of these items will assist the Kinship Navigator staff promote the program within the community and with partnering state agencies.

The program will serve to proactively assist all kinship caregivers, in learning about and accessing services to meet their individual needs and that of the children they are raising. We aim to promote effective partnerships among public and private agencies to ensure kinship caregivers and their families receive support and reach success. The Massachusetts Kinship Navigator Program model will also include structured collaboration between DCF, Family Resource Centers and the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. The program will also develop a Navigator Website designed to

provider resources and supports to kinship caregivers who are licensed through DCF, providing care through a probate court guardianship, or through formal arrangements.

CHILD WELFARE WAIVER DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

The Department implemented its waiver demonstration project on January 1, 2014 and terminated it on June 30, 2018. The waiver demonstration project was designed around the Department's Caring Together system for children in need of a residential level of care. Caring Together continues to serve children and families even though the Department has terminated the waiver.

The Caring Together system offers families a continuity of services and providers whether a child is in a congregate care program or receiving services in their community in order to better support community transitions and strengthen child and caretaker capacity.

The primary goals of the waiver demonstration project aligned with the goals and objectives of the 2015-2019 CFSP as they center on increasing permanency, improving safety, and increasing well-being and positive outcomes in the community. During the operation of the waiver (and continuing today), DCF focused on the successful implementation of the four primary services that are part of the waiver demonstration project: Follow Along, Stepping Out, Continuum, and Family Partner. The results were mixed. Some services we were not able to implement (i.e., Family Partners) while some were successfully implemented. The services are designed to allow congregate care programs and community resources to continue serving youth and family during episodes of out of home treatment and while receiving services in their home and community.

The Department uses Title IV-B monies and flexible Title IV-E funding under the waiver to support the joint management and governance of Caring Together between DCF and DMH, and to cover costs for traditionally unallowable services under 45 CFR 1356.60 (c)(3), such as counseling or other treatment to the child, family, or foster family to remedy home conditions, personal problems or behaviors.

ADOPTION AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

The CFSP submitted on June 30, 2014 and later revised on September 24, 2014, indicated that DCF had not received notification of any adoption incentive funds during the previous five year period. Subsequent to the report submission, DCF received notification of FFY 13 awards to be expended by 9/30/17. During FY 2015 – 2019, the Department received notification of awards as follows:

FFY	Award	Notification	Expenditure deadline
2013	\$16,000	SFY 2014	9/30/2017
2014	\$0	N/A	N/A
2015	\$267,500	SFY 2016	9/30/2019
2016	\$125,000	SFY 2017	9/30/2020
2017	\$1,155,500	SFY 2018	9/30/2021

Throughout this 5 year period, program staff met with budget staff regularly to plan for these funds to ensure that they were obligated and expended by the deadline specified.

All funds awarded from FY'13 were expended by 9/30/17. Of the FY'15 funds awarded, \$139,289 have been expended with the remainder of \$128,211 budgeted for expenditure by 9/30/19.

During SFY15 and SFY16, a portion of the funds was used to support Department staff attendance at the Rudd Adoption Conference at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. The topic was New Worlds of Adoption: Launching into Adulthood. Breakout sessions included the following topics:

- Talking to young adults about being adopted
- Emerging adulthood in Open Adoption
- African American adopted children launching into adulthood
- Navigating access to higher education
- Are we adequately preparing adoption professionals to work with young adult adoptees?

Additional funds were used to purchase camera equipment for use in child-specific recruitment activities, attendance at the National Adoption Conference and in support of recent adoption recruitment activities.

During SFY2017 funds were utilized in the following manner:

- 1) The Director of Adoption Support Services & Subsidy Supervisor attended the AAICAMA annual meeting/conference in Washington D.C. in April of 2017. The meeting included sessions which focused on Federal Adoption & Guardianship Assistance Programs, Interstate Practice for Children & Youth eligible for SSI, Title IV-E eligibility & issues, Civil Rights in Child Welfare, as well as federal laws and how they can be used to improve child wellbeing and strengthen permanence. The Department has committed to an increased focus on permanency and this meeting provided opportunities to maximize programming to achieve these goals. The conference was attended by representation from twenty-seven states. AAICAMA works with states and the adoption community to promote practices and policies to ensure that children who are eligible for adoption assistance receive uninterrupted supportive services. By gaining an enhanced understanding of federal guidelines and regulations concerning our children, networking, and learning from other states, this learning opportunity answered questions and is assisting us in problem solving our revisions to policy and protocol in this area.
- 2) Training and other learning opportunities were provided to 422 DCF and provider agency staff statewide. These activities focused on improving the ability of DCF staff and contracted agencies to

increase successful permanency plans through adoption or guardianship and on providing adoption competent support to DCF children and families.

- On 4/26/17 and 5/4/17 an Adoption Forum titled “Working in Adoption: Supporting Informed Practice” was held. Learning objectives included: understanding the evolving aspects of adoption to support informed practice; appreciation of the complexity of adoption by understanding the universal and unique experiences of the key players and; Skills to engage the members of the adoption team.
- On 4/21/17, 5/1/17, 5/22/17, 5/23/17 and 6/13/17 DCF conducted training entitled, Adoption Homestudies 101. Learning objectives included: Promoting honest and sincere interactions between workers and prospective adoptive parents; identifying, discussing and writing about “red flags”; understanding how comprehensive clinically formulated home studies maximize the potential for permanence and minimize disruption and dissolution; and critical thinking in assessing families and conducting the homestudy.

During SFY2018 funds were utilized in the following manner:

- 1) The Subsidy Supervisor and a Subsidy Administrator attended the AAICAMA annual meeting/conference in Chicago, IL in April of 2018. The meeting focus, Strengthening Permanency Together, included sessions titled: National Center on Adoption and Permanency (NCAP): Resources and Services; Legislative Update; Medicaid: Interstate Cooperation; Medicaid 101: Understanding Medicaid in Adoption Assistance Programs; State Policy and Practice: Eligibility for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Ends at Age 18; Public-Private Partnerships How to Make the Best of Both Worlds as well as other related topics. The Department has committed to an increased focus on permanency and this meeting provided opportunities to maximize programming to achieve these goals. The conference was attended by representation from twenty-seven states. AAICAMA works with states and the adoption community to promote practices and policies to ensure that children who are eligible for adoption assistance receive uninterrupted supportive services. By gaining an enhanced understanding of federal guidelines and regulations concerning our children, networking, and learning from other states, this learning opportunity answered questions and is assisting us in problem solving our revisions to policy and protocol in this area.
 - 2) Training and other learning opportunities were provided to over 600 DCF and provider agency staff statewide. These activities focused on improving the ability of DCF staff and contracted agencies to increase successful permanency plans through adoption or guardianship and on providing adoption competent support to DCF children and families.
- On 7/17/17, DCF conducted training titled, “Adoption Homestudies 101”. Learning objectives included: Promoting honest and sincere interactions between workers and prospective adoptive parents; identifying, discussing and writing about “red flags”; understanding how comprehensive clinically formulated home studies maximize the potential for permanence and minimize disruption and dissolution; and critical thinking in assessing families and conducting the homestudy.
 - On 8/23/17, 9/6/17 and 3/26/18, DCF conducted training titled “Stuff No One Wants to Talk About: Engaging Kids in Difficult Conversations”. Learning objectives included: Understanding of the importance of sharing accurate information in a sensitive and developmentally appropriate manner with youth; Improved skills to foster relationships with youth in care that encourages a comfortable and reliable space for discussing challenging issues; embracing a thoughtful and reflective attitude and manner when engaging youth in difficult discussions about history, birth family, and permanency solutions.

- On 10/4/17, 10/10/17, 10/13/17, 10/25/17 and 11/8/17, a five day series of trainings was held for Family Resource and Adoption staff. Curriculum focused on Critical thinking in permanency planning; Child development and trauma; Understanding state and federal guidelines; Engaging and assessing foster and adoptive families; Engaging and assessing children with an adoption goal; as well as other complex issues.
 - On 12/1/17, DCF co-sponsored a symposium with the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange titled “Birth Family Integration in Adoption Best Practice”.
 - On 4/2/18 and 5/30/18, DCF conducted a training titled “The Art of Adoption Matching”. Learning objectives included: Understanding of the considerations for youth and family matching; federal and departmental policy regarding finding permanent families for youth in need; Strategies for successful matching opportunities.
 - On 4/13/18, thirty-eight DCF staff attended the 2018 Rudd Adoption Research New Worlds of Adoption Conference, “The Future of Adoption: Beyond Safety to Well-Being” which took place on the campus of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
 - On 5/21/18, 6/7/18 and 6/20/18, DCF conducted trainings titled Core Clinical Issues in Adoption and Foster Care”. Learning objectives included: Understanding the evolving aspects of adoption to support informed practice; Appreciation of the complexity of adoption by understanding the universal and unique experiences of the key players and; Skills to engage and support children, youth, and families.
 - On 6/6/18, DCF conducted a training titled “Unpacking the No: Exploring Why Youth Don’t Want to Be Adopted”. Learning objectives included: Understanding the most common reasons a youth will resist being adopted; Strategies for engaging youth in a dialogue about considering adoption; Explaining adoption to youth who are resistant to being adopted.
- 3) All Family Resource, Recruitment, Adoption Development Licensing and Adoption Units received copies of How to Screen Adoptive and Foster Parents: A Workbook for Professionals and Students by James L. Dickerson, Mardi Allen and Daniel Pollack.
 - 4) Books written for children and youth about adoption were purchased and provided to all youth adopted on National Adoption Day.

During SFY2019 funds were utilized in the following manner:

- 1) The Subsidy Supervisor and a Subsidy Administrator attended the AAICAMA annual meeting/conference in Austin, TX in June of 2019. The meeting focus, Building Permanency across States and Stakeholders, included sessions titled: The Adoption Exchange: Connecting Children and Families; Legislative Update; Medicaid: Interstate Cooperation; Medicaid and its role in Permanency – A Core Understanding of Adoption Assistance Success; State Policy and Practice: Children’s Bureau Updates including Families First Prevention Services Act; Improving Practice: Solutions-Working together to share what works, as well as other related topics. The Department has committed to an increased focus on permanency and this meeting provided opportunities to maximize programming to achieve these goals. AAICAMA works with states and the adoption community to promote practices and policies to ensure that children who are eligible for adoption assistance receive uninterrupted supportive services. By continuing to gain an enhanced understanding changes and new federal guidelines and regulations concerning our children, networking, and learning from other

states, this learning opportunity continues to assist us in problem solving our revisions to policy and protocol in this area.

- 2) The Director of Adoption Support Services and Director of Foster Care Support Services and Recruitment attended the Bi-annual Adoption Exchange Association's National Conference in Orlando, Florida in April of 2019. The conference focus, Inspiring Leadership in Adoption, included sessions titled: Recruiting and Retaining Rural African Adoptive Families; Reimagining Recruitment Content and Putting Youth Voices First; Developing and Supporting Prospective and Current Adoptive Parents; Innovative Strategies for Increasing Adoptability for Older Youth in Child Welfare; NTI – Supporting Permanency through Adoption Competent Mental Health Service, as well as other related topics.
- 3) Training and other learning opportunities were provided to over 650 DCF and provider agency staff statewide. These activities focused on increasing and enhancing the competency of DCF staff and contracted agencies to increase the timeliness of permanency and on providing adoption competent support to DCF children and families.
 - On 7/18/18, DCF conducted a training titled “Core Clinical Issues in Adoption and Foster Care”. Learning objectives included: Understanding the evolving aspects of adoption to support informed practice; Appreciation of the complexity of adoption by understanding the universal and unique experiences of the key players and; Skills to engage and support children, youth, and families.
 - On 7/23/18, 8/14/18, and 12/20/18, DCF conducting trainings titled “Sibling Connections: Supporting Critical Relationships”. The training addressed the reality that sibling relationships are arguably the longest of a person’s life and are often the groundwork for various social skills, conflict management strategies, and emotional connections. Staff learned and discussed strategies to support and actualize sibling connections.
 - Two 5 day series of trainings was held for Family Resource and Adoption staff on 10/10/18, 10/16/18, 10/23/18, 10/30/18 and 11/14/18, then again on 4/12/19, 4/29/19, 5/7/19, 5/13/19 and 5/31/19. Curriculum focused on Critical thinking in permanency planning; Child development and trauma; Understanding state and federal guidelines; Engaging and assessing foster and adoptive families; Engaging and assessing children with an adoption goal; as well as other complex issues.
 - On 11/29/18, DCF co-sponsored a symposium with the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange titled “Supporting Youth in Making a Choice of Family”.
 - On 12/3/18, DCF conducted a training titled “Unpacking the No: Exploring Why Youth Don’t Want to Be Adopted”. Learning objectives included: Understanding the most common reasons a youth will resist being adopted; Strategies for engaging youth in a dialogue about considering adoption; Explaining adoption to youth who are resistant to being adopted.
 - On 12/19/18, 1/27/19 and 3/19/19, DCF conducted trainings titled “Transition Planning for Permanency: Considerations and Strategies”. Against a backdrop of development and the core clinical issues, this training focused on how to best prepare children, youth, and families to transition from a foster care placement to adoption or reunification with birth family. Strategies to support youth of all ages to move from temporary placement to a permanent placement were presented and discussed.

- On 2/12/19, DCF conducted a training titled “Ongoing work is essential to facilitating adoption as a permanency goal”. This training was developed to assist our staff in our ongoing protective services units understand the work of the adoption units and the significant role ongoing staff play if a child’s goal changes to adoption. It provided an opportunity to share learn and strategies and to identify challenges doing ongoing social work with families.
- 4) The following books were purchased to provide to each child on the day of their adoption finalization:
- “Adopted Like Me: My Book of Adopted Heroes” by Ann Angel
 - “ABC, Adoption& Me – a Multi-cultural Picture Book for Adoptive Families” by Gayle H. Swift
 - “Pieces of Me: Who do I Want to Be” by Robert L. Ballard

DCF recognizes the incredible opportunities these funds have afforded our staff, families and entire system. The very significant increases in the awarded funds have presented a bit of an initial challenge which we have worked diligently to overcome. We recognize the impact we can make on a larger scale than what our previous plans addressed. We will continue to offer a robust array of trainings and provide staff with opportunities to attend national conferences. In July 2019, several staff will present at the North American Council on Adoptable Children annual conference to share the curriculum we developed for our Adoption and Family Resource 5 day pre-service as well as the Agile Scrum model utilized for system wide agency improvements. Over the past fiscal year, we have also begun a procurement process to further enhance support services offered to our children and pre-adoptive families.

The Department acknowledges changes to the adoption and legal guardianship incentive payment program brought about by the enactment of PL113-183. The law extended from 24 months to 36 months the length of time states have to spend incentive payments earned under the program; also the law prevents states from using incentive payments to supplant federal or non-federal funds for services under title IV-B or IVE. At present, these changes do not impact the Department’s plans for use of the incentive funds.

C3. UPDATE ON SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Below we provide an update on the services provided through the programs/services areas identified in the program instruction. For each program, we provide a description of the services provided in FY2015 - 2019 relative to the key outcomes for the grants. We also provide program-specific information requested by the program instruction. Data related to the number of individuals served and the population served is provided in the CFS-101, Part II.

Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Program (Title IV-B, subpart 1)

The Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program (Title IV-B, subpart 1) provides critical funding for a variety of child welfare services. During FY2015 - FY2019, the services provided remained consistent. The Department used grant funding to achieve the following key outcomes:

- *Protecting and promoting the welfare of children/preventing the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children*– The Department used IV-B subpart 1 funds to support social worker travel in the performance of their duties serving children and families.
- *Supporting at-risk families* – The Department used IV-B subpart 1 funds to fund two programs that provide services that allow children to remain with their families or return to their families in a timely manner. The first is Family Support Services, which provides needed flexible supports to intact families with the focus on keeping children safe in their homes. The second is the operation of Family Resource Centers throughout the Commonwealth. The Family Resource Centers provide resource and referral services to families in need prior to their involvement with the Department.

PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM (TITLE IV-B, SUBPART2)

Introduction

This report summarizes the efforts and progress made over the past five years, 2015-2019. DCF has submitted an Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) that highlights progress made under the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). Additionally, the report provides a cumulative response to the array of implemented services, preventive supports, and best practice initiatives aligned in the DCF Strategic Plan.

DCF's approach to prevention of child abuse and neglect is rooted in the premise that community child welfare work needs to be integrated with the community to truly have an impact in reducing the risk factors that lead to child abuse and neglect. The five-year plan submitted in 2014 continued to support and fund Community Connections programs that are committed to the Five Protective Factors framework promoted by the Center for the Study of Social Policies.

Community Connections Coalitions (CCC), Family Resource Centers (FRCs), PATCH Programs, Family Nurturing Centers (FNC) and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren follow a strategic plan that incorporates the five protective factors: Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Childhood Development, Concrete Services in Times of Need, and Social and Emotional Competence of Children. A key strategy, to align community connected practice with the PSSF framework that includes Family Preservations, Community-Based Family Support, Family Reunification

and Adoption Promotion, has been the integration of these same principles in the DCF Family Assessment Action Plan (FAAP).

The Department continues to engage in policy reforms that support the goals of family-centered practices. The work in the past five years continues to shape the overall collaborative partnership with multiple community stakeholders government/state agencies such as the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Juvenile Court, Department of Youth Services (DYS), the Department of Education and many nonprofit families serving agencies.

DCF has worked consistently to expand and strengthen community partnership. Utilizing the Community Connections model and prioritizing elements of partnership engagement, the Department recognizes that engaging community partners helps build healthier and safer communities. Partnering with community-based providers is the most effective way to understand what services and supports families need to thrive and avoid unnecessary family disruptions.

In the 2015-2019 Plan, DCF utilized a shared vision strategy, informed by data and other relevant community information, to partner with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and expand Family Resource Centers (FRCs). DCF continued to ensure opportunities to strengthen family voices by promoting Family Advisory Committees (FAC) and Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Teams (FELTs).

In the fall of 2015, in response to several critical cases of children that were involved with the Department, the Administration engaged the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) to conduct an overall assessment of the agency practices. The Community Connections Coalitions, along with the FAC members, were instrumental in gathering families to share their stories with CWLA.

During the past several years as the Department has undertaken many reform efforts, Community Connections Coalitions has continued to serve as a think tank for innovations and strategies. Parents have been involved in policies and advisory boards.

In FY 2016, Coalitions linked their objectives in their actions plans to the Five Protective Factors and these factors continue to serve as a foundation for their work. Linking staff development to the work being done at PATCH sites, DCF has implemented a key Patch practice, group supervision, as part of the process to assess cases.

Community Connections

Community Connections Coalitions has provided significant leadership in developing an integrated community response system in Massachusetts, promoting the idea that responsibility for the well-being of children and families must rest not simply on state government but be shared with cities, towns, local agencies and organizations and, perhaps most importantly, with families, friends and neighbors. A crucial component of the impact of the initiative has been the ability to build trust with neighborhood residents. Additionally, Coalitions have served as the vehicle to nurture parent leadership skills and to mentor parents to participate in forums where policies and practice decisions are made that affect their families. Many other institutions, agencies, and organizations look to Community Connections for leadership in this area. Strategies that were embedded in the Community Connections logic model are now institutionalized into DCF policies and practice and include parent involvement in planning, service delivery and evaluation; wider use of peers, groups, and informal support; and the employment of

demographic data to inform and focus efforts and direct resources geographically. Family involvement and partnership are now widely seen as the cornerstone of good child welfare practice in Massachusetts.

Family Support

The Lowell Alliance of Families and Neighborhoods was one of several founders and sits on the board of the Refugee and Immigrant Coalition, which was established in FY14. A representative from 20 agencies have subsequently met monthly to share information and explore ways to collaborate in order to increase access and coordinate services to better meet the needs of refugees and immigrants. Lowell Alliance staff provides leadership to the Steering Committee, which in FY14 conducted an Immigration and Refugee Needs Assessment and has since partnered with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) to hold annual *Citizenship Clinics* and Informational Forums and organize Know Your Rights workshops to help eligible green-card holders apply for U.S. citizenship. The Lowell Alliance has also collaborated with several community agencies (International Institute, Lowell Public Schools) to host an annual conference focused on raising community awareness of the refugee experience, identifying and sharing local resources, and helping facilitate the coordination and integration of services for refugees. In addition, they have provided capacity-building and mentoring to the New American Center of Lowell in developing a full-service center for refugees and immigrants who have resettled in Lowell.

Another example the Alliance's support for immigrants and refugees was the continuation of its *Khmer Parent Support Group* which began in FY15. It is a resident-led group of between twenty and thirty Cambodian families, who come together on a weekly basis to provide mutual support, learn about community resources and how to access them, and work on community projects. The group creates its agendas, determines which community projects they would participate in and does outreach to those in the community who can help them reach their goals. In FY16, the Coalition worked with the Cambodian community to help plan and execute the Cambodian New Year's Celebration the event was attended by over 300 residents, including local and state governmental officials. This support group hosted 30 outside speakers in FY17 who presented information about resources available in the community. Presenters included representatives from Lowell Votes, Lowell Community Health Center, Mass Health, Visiting Nurses Association and Asian Task Force on Domestic Violence, among many others.

The Lowell Alliance for Families and Neighborhoods brought over 200 volunteers together to build and refresh five community gardens in the City of Lowell with a *Sowing the Seeds of Community* event, which was planned and funded by a partnership of many local agencies and organizations. In-kind contributions were provided by numerous local and national businesses. Eighty-eight new garden beds were built; over 50 dump trucks of soil were moved using shovels, buckets and, most importantly, people power. Thereafter, they established the Franklin Court Community Gardening Group, a coalition of families and youth who maintain the gardens at the Franklin Court Community Garden in the Acre neighborhood in Lowell. The goals of the community garden have been, and continue to be, to form social connections, produce healthy and culturally-appropriate produce, to be a place for sharing gardening knowledge and resources, to promote sustainable gardening practices, and to build a sense of community among the gardeners. Additionally, in FY17, the Coalition partnered with a Better Acre Open Pantry and neighborhood residents to host the Culturally Appropriate Food Project. The gardening group, in addition to producing healthy food for its participants, donated over forty pounds of produce to the Open Pantry. The Alliance coordinated ten community meetings at the garden. Seven gardeners volunteered to attend the Mill City Grows Urban Gardening, attended workshops which trained participants to develop leadership skills and who then became Community Garden Coordinators in their own neighborhoods. Thereafter, they engaged with the Partnering with Youth group to rebuild and increase garden boxes and install new fencing and a bench at the garden. The results of these efforts went far beyond the production of food in that participants established valuable social connections and an increased connection to their community. These efforts built on the successes of FY16 during which six

community meetings were hosted at the gardens and the capacity of the gardens was increased by six beds.

Another way to increase families' parenting skills is collaborating with The Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts (FNC). The mission of the agency is to promote Nurturing Parenting® programs that include a number of iterations of Nurturing Fathers, Nurturing Families, and similar evidence-based curricula with a goal of preventing child abuse and neglect. FNC is a nationally recognized training institution for Nurturing Parenting® programs in the state of Massachusetts and provides training and mentoring for a variety of Nurturing Program curricula. They are affiliated with Dr. Stephen Bavolek, Ph.D., the principal author of Nurturing Parenting Programs®, and Mark Perlman, the author of the Nurturing Father's program, who has designated FNC as the State Training and Resource Affiliate for the Nurturing Father's Program in Massachusetts.

DCF began formally partnering with FNC in 1994 and over the past twenty years, while specific objectives have changed, the broader goals of our work together have remained the same:

- Work closely with DCF Regional Community Support staff to train and support DCF and other agency staff across the state in the philosophy and principles of the Nurturing Parenting® program;
- Develop Nurturing Parenting® Programs for families in partnership with DCF offices and their local agency partners; and
- Train and support Community Connections sites, Family Resource Centers, and other community organizations to develop Nurturing Parenting® Programs.

These goals have been approached in three ways:

1. Capacity building, which includes training and technical assistance;
2. Nurturing network development, which includes Nurturing Network meetings and other forms of communication with those who have already been trained and others who want to learn about the work; and
3. Nurturing program development where FNC provides technical assistance and support to DCF and other agencies to deliver programs for families.

1. Capacity Building

FNC has an experienced team of trainers on staff and we have several consultants throughout the state, who help us train approximately 150- 250 people a year. As FNC delivers training in the Nurturing Program®, it is important to model all parts of program delivery for participants. For that reason, two nationally recognized trainers lead each training, just as two facilitators would lead the children's and parents' groups of each program. Participants are required to complete the whole training just as families participating in the Nurturing Programs are required to complete the whole program. Each day of the training is structured to include "Family Nurturing Time" including sharing a meal, playing, and singing. By doing this, participants in the training are nurtured and taught the importance of doing this in their own program.

The demand for training and consultation for Nurturing Programs for Families and Fathers has grown steadily over the years. In 1999, FNC offered two trainings in the Nurturing Parenting Program and trained about 40 people in the model. In 2018, fourteen trainings were delivered, training 246 people. Since 1999, FNC has trained over 2000 people from DCF and the community.

The last five years of growth is due in large part to the development of a DCF Strategic Plan for Fatherhood Engagement and the creation of the Family Resource Centers.

DCF Regional Community Support Managers and the Director of Fatherhood Engagement worked closely with FNC to create a new three-day training that would equip staff to facilitate a Nurturing Fathers Program. The planning team committed to implementing five Nurturing Family and five Nurturing Fathers trainings across the state annually. At the same time, we worked together to establish Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Teams (FELT teams) in area offices. As part of this initiative, 5-7 DCF staff meets regularly to develop area office plans for fatherhood engagement. We also trained fathers who have been through the system to present to DCF and other agency staff about their experiences in the system and their desire to be involved with their children. These *Fathers Speak* teams facilitated presentations with FNC's Director of Nurturing Fathers Programs and the DCF Director of Fatherhood Engagement. DCF supported the fathers in this effort with stipends that covered some of their time and travel costs. The presentations were compelling and many DCF staff were inspired to set goals regarding fatherhood engagement in their offices. Many were also motivated to develop area office-based programs and to refer parents on their caseloads and/or participate in the 3-day family and/or fathers training so that they could become program facilitators themselves.

In 2015, Massachusetts opened 14 Family Resource Centers (FRCs) across the Commonwealth. This was a significant investment in services designed to support families most at risk for involvement in child protection or juvenile court systems. The Nurturing Parenting® program was one of three evidence-based group programs that FRCs could implement at their sites. The lead agency at the time was the University of Massachusetts Medical School. DCF contracted with UMass, and by extension FNC, to deliver a number of trainings across the state and offer technical assistance to support the FRCs in starting new programs. The following chart summarizes a number of trainings delivered and the number of individuals trained to be facilitators in the last five years. The numbers listed below also include trainings conducted with staff from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

	FY14 16	FY15 13	FY16 17	FY17 14	FY18 18	Totals 78
Nurturing Program Facilitator Trainings						
Professionals Trained by FNC	217	175	269	149	246	1056

During this period, an additional full-time staff person was added to the FNC training team and FNC also sub-contracted with three organizations in the Western and Southeast Regions who had staff with deep experience training others in the philosophy of the nurturing approach.

Assessing Training Impact

FNC sent email surveys to its database of individuals who had gone through the Nurturing Family and Nurturing Fathers trainings. The goal was to better understand who participated, how useful the training was to their work, and what recommendations they had for how the training could be improved.

Survey Highlights:

- 137 individuals representing over 90 public and private agencies responded to the Survey (about a 20% response rate).
- Just over 50% of respondents said that after the training they went on to facilitate or co-facilitate a program.
- 71% of respondents indicated that the training helped them in their work with their clients.
- 63% indicated that they used the nurturing principles and concepts in their personal lives.

- 63% said that the training helped them feel more confident and knowledgeable in their work with parents.
- 90% of trainees agreed or strongly agreed that the training met their in-service need.
- 66% of those trained recommended the training to their colleagues.
- 54% said that the training resulted in them making more referrals of families to the programs in their area.

The survey also provided participant recommendations regarding future trainings. These recommendations include:

- Offer specialized 1-day refresher courses and specialized modules.
- Build in relevant themes which are not currently discussed in trainings (i.e. substance abuse, domestic violence, and “screen time” for children).
- Help build out formal/informal networks and share best practices for engaging graduates beyond Nurturing Programs.
- Enable connections between Nurturing Program facilitators so they can share resources and best practices.

The survey confirmed that the training was helping professionals, especially DCF social workers, to become more strength-based and family-focused in their practice. Many more families were benefitting from the Nurturing Programs offered by others across the Commonwealth. Survey respondents were also letting the planning team know that they wanted more frequent support and skill-based training.

As FNC and DCF worked to implement these trainings, other state agencies became interested in considering how they could offer the training to their staff and contracted providers. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), responsible for the state’s homeless shelter system of care, began working with FNC to offer trainings to staff in their network. FNC has worked with DCF and DHCD to efficiently and effectively schedule training to serve the greatest number of participants. Both state agencies have taken leadership to ensure a wide range of community and faith-based organizations have participated in this work. Some of these are listed below:

- Ahavah Family Services
- Athol Hospital
- BAMSI
- Bay State Community Services
- Berkshire County Sheriff’s Office
- Bethel Institute
- Behavioral Health Network (BHN)
- Boston Public School
- Brandeis University
- Bridge Family Resource Center
- Brightside for Families and Children
- Cape Ann Area Office
- Cape Cod Family Resource Center
- Centerboard Family Resource Center
- Community Care Alliance
- Cross Country Painting Co. Inc.
- CSO, Family Resource Center
- Dove Human Services

- Family and Community Resource Centers
- Family Continuity
- Family Services
- Father Friendly Initiative
- FCS Lynn
- Federal Bureau of Prisons - FMC Devens
- Framingham Coalition
- Friendly House Shelter, Inc.
- Future Hope Apprenticeship & Recovery Program
- Gardner Pilot Academy
- Healing Internal Ministries
- Healthy Baby Healthy Child
- Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Institute, Tufts Medical Center
- MA Department of Children and Families
- MGH Chelsea
- MOC Community Partnership Fitchburg/Ashby
- Morrison Management Healthcare
- Mass Society of Professional Psychology
- Nurturing Fathers
- Optician
- Pernet Family Health
- Private Practice
- Roger L. Putnam Voc. Tech. Academy
- South Boston Action Center/ABCD
- Springfield Family Resource Center
- Springfield Housing Authority
- Tabernacle Multi-Service center
- Temporary Home for Women and Children
- The Family Center
- The Salasin Project
- Triumph, Inc.
- UMass Administrative Service Organization
- Valuing Our Children
- Virginia Department of Social Services
- Walgreens
- Wayside MetroWest
- Wayside Youth & Family Support Network
- West Roxbury Municipal Court/ Probation
- YOU, Inc.

Below is an example of the training schedule, for the state agencies and attendees in FY18. Additional trainings provided to community agencies are not included in this list.

FY 2018 3 DAY TRAININGS

DATE	LOCATION	SPONSOR	# ATTENDING
		FATHERS' TRAININGS	
9/19-9/21, 2017	Haverhill	DCF	25
10/16-10/18, 2017	Plymouth	DCF	22
12/11-12/13, 2017	Plymouth	DCF	15
5/1-5/3, 2018	Boston	DCF	22
5/7-5/9, 2018	South Hadley	DCF	6
		FAMILY TRAININGS	
9/28-10/3, 2017	Boston	DCF	25
11/1-11/3, 2017	Framingham	DCF	11
2/27-3/1, 2017	Quincy	DCF	13
1/30- 2/1, 6 2018	Quincy	DCF- COASTAL OFFICE	17
4/9-4/11, 2018	South Hadley	DCF	6
5/15-5/17, 2018	Haverhill	DCF	16
4/24-4/26, 2018	Springfield	DHCD	18

2. Nurturing Network Development

FNC maintains and posts on its web site a calendar of Nurturing Programs offered in and around Boston and trainings throughout the state. FNC provides an online registration process for all of its trainings through Eventbrite. FNC offers an opportunity for statewide networking and relationship building by holding statewide Nurturing Network Meetings and an Annual Nurturing Fathers' Institute. Over the past five years, these statewide meetings have provided valuable updates on the latest information about Nurturing Programs, as well as opportunities for DCF and community agency staff to network and share information. FNC continues to update and expand its e-mail list of Nurturing Network participants.

Each network meeting has had an average attendance of 50-75 people. The meetings begin with icebreakers and updates regarding new developments or research related to the Nurturing Programs. There is usually a panel of presenters, who coordinate or facilitate Nurturing Programs. Panelists focus on different issues that arise in their practice. Topics vary but have included Managing Trauma, Developing Nurturing Activities for the children's groups, Working with Specific Populations (e.g., Birth, Foster and Kinship families, LGBTQIA, etc.) and tips regarding group facilitation.

Two Other Network Focused Activities

The Fatherhood Ambassador Leadership Program

During the past four years (2015-2019), a team of fathers who have graduated from the Nurturing Fathers' Program and whose cases are closed with DCF (*The Ambassadors*) traveled throughout Massachusetts sharing their stories that promote positive fatherhood engagement. These presentations have taken place in the community and faith-based agencies and DCF offices including Park Street, Haverhill, Lawrence, Salem, Chelsea, Haverhill, Plymouth, Cambridge, Dimock, and Hyde Park DCF Area Offices; and Parent University, Up Academy Dorchester Elementary School, and the Roxbury Court Probation Department.

Fatherhood Leadership Summit and the New England Fathering Conference

FNC has worked with the DCF regional offices across the state to coordinate participation in the *Fatherhood Leadership Summit* and the *New England Fathering Conference*. In the last three years, members of the DCF Family Advisory Committee, FRC staff and programs, Community Connections, DCF regional staff and parents have attended these events.

3. Nurturing Program Development

Each year, FNC contracts with the Boston Regional DCF office to offer Nurturing Programs in each of its four area offices. FNC coordinates these programs, but there is close collaboration between each area office and FNC. Staff members from the area offices help to facilitate the groups. This has been an effective partnership and is a natural outgrowth from the training and technical assistance previously described.

FNC's commitment has been to pilot and deliver new programs and then to teach other public and non-profit community groups throughout the state to offer their own programs while providing training and mentoring to their staff. The Nurturing Fathers Program has spread throughout the state. It is now offered in every Boston Area office of DCF and at other offices in all of the DCF regions. FNC has collaborated with the Dimock Street DCF office for 16 years to deliver a Birth, Foster, and Kinship Family Nurturing Program that meets the specific needs of children in care, the families caring for them, and birth parents. It is the only program of its kind in the country. That program has now expanded to the Southeast region. FNC also works with DCF offices to offer a Nurturing Program for Parents and Adolescents, and for Cape Verdean Families, which is delivered in Cape Verdean Creole.

Below is a summary of programs that FNC has coordinated in the last 5 years with participation and outcome data. Every year, 6-10 of these programs are collaborations between FNC and DCF with many DCF staff that has gone through the Nurturing Program training participating in the groups. The programs are well attended with good retention rates. FNC uses the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI) which is a validated outcome measurement tool designed by Dr. Stephen Bavolek, who also is the author of the Nurturing Parenting Program.

These programs run for 12-15 weeks and, on average, 12-15 families participate. As DCF staff participates, they deepen their knowledge and understanding of family support principles. Many of them stay involved year after year in part because they are engaging with families in positive, fun, strength-based ways and they can see parents using more nurturing communication and nurturing discipline in their interactions.

Nurturing Programs	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	TOTALS
Number of programs led by FNC	11	9	11	13	18	62
Parent Participants	167	138	153	196	199	853
Parent Graduates	125	104	119	168	172	688
Retention	75%	75%	78%	86%	86%	80%
Number with completed pre and post AAPIs	100	71	83	114	136	504
% change in Appropriate Expectations	16%	5%	11%	9%	14%	11%
% change in Empathy	20%	22%	20%	18%	32%	22%
% change in Discipline with Dignity	14%	11%	17%	16%	19%	15%

% change in Appropriate Family Roles	19%	10%	10%	3%	15%	11%
% change in Power & Independence	10%	9%	26%	9%	12%	13%

Five-year goals for Training and Technical Assistance

- Continue the joint planning with DCF Central Office Program Staff and Regional Community Support Managers. These meetings have been critical to successful program expansion, help to avoid duplication and ensure optimal attendance at trainings.
- Deepen the work with the Department of Housing and Community Development and expand initial conversations and partnerships with the Departments of Mental Health (DMH) and Public Health (DPH) to help spread Nurturing Fathers and Families programs to shelters and other settings.
- Remain actively connected to Dr. Bavolek and the National Nurturing Network to keep informed about the latest research and developments that may impact on program and curricula development.
- Continue to deepen the expertise in Nurturing Program outcome data and provide technical assistance and training in this specific area as needed throughout the state.
- Review the three-day trainings for the Nurturing Fathers Programs and the Family Nurturing Programs to ensure that they contain the most recent practice knowledge.
- Develop the Father Ambassadors Program by recruiting and training new members for public and private presentations.
- Complete and pilot an intensive training in the AAPI (Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory) that will teach staff to administer, score, and share the results with parents.
- Pilot the ten-hour “Bridge” Training for people who have been trained in the Family Nurturing Program and who have an interest in facilitating a Nurturing Fathers Program.
- Pilot the Nurturing Skills training, especially for staff that makes home visits.
- Identify a community partner with FNC to offer the Nurturing Program curriculum for LGBTQIA families.
- Offer one national Training of Trainers (ToT) during the year.

Family Reunification

In the area of Family Reunification, Community Connections Coalitions support DCF in foster care recruitment in many ways including holding community meetings and informing DCF Area Board Staff of local gatherings, fairs and other events at which recruitment efforts may prove fruitful (sometimes partnering with them at those events or representing the DCF themselves.) There are a wide variety of ways that coalitions distribute foster care information both online or at local agencies, organizations and other informal groups concerned with the well-being of children and families. The New Bedford Foster Care Task Force has often been the model that other Community Connections Coalitions look to as they seek to build partnerships with their local DCF Area Offices.

Best Practice Example:

Since 2000, one important goal of the New Bedford Community Connections Coalition has been to increase the public’s awareness of the multi-faceted needs and challenges facing foster children and to create a broad-based philanthropic support for resources and supports that seek to enrich their well-being and development. In 2000, the coalition established the NBCCC Task Force for Foster Care Support.

The Task Force consists of representatives of DCF, New Bedford Public Schools, foster parents, and youth-serving organizations. The Task Force has narrowed its current action planning to focus on areas of creating

community awareness of foster children and youth and ensuring the well-being of foster children in regards to education, health and transition issues.

NBCCC continued to increase the public's awareness of the multi-faceted needs and challenges facing foster children and create a broad-based philanthropic support for resources and supports that seek to enrich their well-being and development. The Task Force supported the Area Office as part of a statewide Foster Care Recruitment Day at the local YMCA. They collaborated with the organizer of a local event, *Taste of South Coast* that was happening the same day at their local pier. The other event organizer agreed to have a DCF recruitment table at the Taste of South Coast at the pier in addition to the planned activities at the YMCA. As a result, the New Bedford Area office had the largest number of foster care inquiries in the state on that day.

The *Take This Child to Heart* fundraiser has over many years provided funds for enrichment scholarships for foster children. The TTCTH committee was comprised of DCF staff, foster parents, and community partners such as youth-serving organizations and the local police department. The night created an opportunity to bring awareness to the needs of foster children in our area. The committee worked tirelessly to obtain many sponsorships and donations for the raffle to make the night a financial success as well. The event had a profit of over \$12,000 allowing the group to support 17 foster children with summer camp opportunities that would otherwise not have been available to them. The coalition also awarded \$1,500 scholarships to three foster youths that will be attending college.

In FY15, NBCCC partnered with the New Bedford Area Office to co-sponsoring the Foster Family Cook Out and Foster Children's Holiday Party. Over 100 foster parents and children attended each event. During Foster Care Month NBCCC also co-sponsored a Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner which was attended by over 60 foster parents. At the dinner, they awarded the community partnership award to YMCA South Coast for giving foster children free yearly membership for the last ten years. As a result of the YMCA's commitment to foster children over 200 children have enjoyed the use of the YMCA and its activities.

In FY16, an annual Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner was held to recognize foster parents for commitment to the areas foster children. The South Coast Hospital System was awarded the community partnership award for their support of foster children because of their role in being sponsoring the *Take This Child to Heart* fundraiser, as well as donating funds for baby supplies such as pack and plays for infants entering foster care.

In FY17, the annual Foster Children's Holiday Party was attended by with over 260 foster kids and parents attending.

FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) is to bring together a diverse group of community representatives whose various experiences with DCF provides a unique perspective from which to advise the Commissioner and help inform agency decisions. The composition of the FAC are family members with personal experiences with the Department, those who have had open protective cases with DCF, people who were involved with DCF as a youth, and community members invested in the safety and well-being of children across the Commonwealth.

The Department strives to keep its decision-making processes transparent by engaging community members in the review of new, or modified, agency initiatives. The FAC provides the opportunity for parents and other community members to have input into the development of practice, policies, and programs that affect families. The FAC builds mutual accountability between the Department and the families it serves by creating opportunities for dialogue and learning from both perspectives.

The FAC meets at least four times per year and is staffed by the DCF Community and Family Engagement Manager. Together, they develop a yearly Action Plan to guide the work of the FAC. FAC members receive stipends for their time and expertise. Some members choose to volunteer or are able to get release time from their employers.

Recruitment and Retention

In FY17, the FAC Leadership Team developed a Recruitment and Retention Plan to diversify the cohort of Family Representatives. The plan is designed to identify parents with lived experience as consumers of service with DCF. The group is comprised of Birth Parents, Foster Parents, Adoptive Parents, Kinship Caregivers, Alumni of Foster Care, Community Advocates, and Youth Representatives.

In FY19, the FAC increased the representation of parents on the FAC and began orientation and mentoring program to support new members. The current composition of the FAC is rich with experience and talent. The 15 women and 12 men who comprise the core of Family Representatives are a culturally diverse group of 9 African American, 15 Caucasian, and 3 Latinx Parents from each of the five Regions of the Commonwealth.

The group possesses diverse expertise in various disciplines including legal services, the courts, veteran services, administration, nursing, human services, juvenile justice, mental health, marketing, public relations, non-profit management, clergy, social work, and domestic violence.

Family Advisory Committee Action Plan

The FAC continues to consistently review and contribute to the Family Advisory Committee Action Plan. The primary goal of the Action Plan is to assist DCF by giving it a roadmap for the inclusion of community and parent participation that ensures that family voice is integrated into program planning, policy development and delivery and monitoring of Department's services.

To accomplish this, the FAC participates in various forums and operational meetings. The 12 member Leadership Team of the FAC participates in the monthly Statewide Managers meeting. This meeting includes DCF's Area, Regional, Legal and Central Office Leadership. The Leadership Team also attends monthly Team Meetings with the Community Support Manager staffing the FAC. Additionally, the FAC Leadership Team facilitates and maintains FAC sub-committees and workgroups to coordinate the Action Plan activities with DCF staff.

The FAC members also serve on the DCF Area Boards as Family and Community Representatives. Currently, 16 members participate on DCF Area Boards. The FAC members are involved in work groups that have made comprehensive changes to the way the agency's intake and service plans assist social workers to better engage families for better outcomes. For example, one of the major accomplishments in 2018 for the FAC and DCF was connecting Area Offices with Family Representatives on the FAC. These members are assisting in recruiting parents and community representatives and reviving DCF Area Boards.

DCF is working with the FAC to improve its practice. The primary area of focus on 2GEN or Two-generation approaches to addressing the needs of both children and their adult caregivers together and finding better ways to support grandparents and kinship caregivers in the face of the continuing opioid crisis.

Interagency Work

In past surveys with parents, the FAC identified a need for greater consistency in practice and communication between agencies for families who have children that are dually involved with our sister agencies, particularly the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Youth Services (DYS). It is a goal of the FAC to assist in improving these connections and lend support to parents.

Despite changes in the program collaboration, members of the FAC continue to serve on DMH's Caring Together Family Advisory Council. Both parents have lived experience with the two agencies. The FAC lends family voice and has been integral in the role of permanency in DCF, and have also been involved in other Caring Together discussions about families and permanency practice. FAC representatives and DCF Staff participate in an 80 member learning group on Permanency Practice Dialogue.

Caring Together services include a range of in-home and out of the home services for children and families involved with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and/or DCF. Services provide clinically intensive treatment and outreach support to help build, strengthen and maintain connections to family, home and community so that children and families can live together successfully. Services are accessed by DCF and DMH staff in order to support children and families who need an intensive level of clinical treatment to return to, or remain living with, their families.

The Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) is an initiative of DYS with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Massachusetts juvenile justice leaders. Two FAC representatives participate in the Suffolk County and Hampden County Collaboratives. JDAI's strategic planning is designed to:

- Reduce detention rates of low-risk youth
- Identify opportunities to reduce lengths of stay in detention through case processing reforms
- Reduce racial and ethnic disparities
- Replicate JDAI with fidelity at a local level

JDAI Massachusetts produced *Seeing RED* as a tool for the network of committed child welfare and juvenile justice stakeholders. This film lays out the problem of disproportional representation of children of color in the juvenile justice system and the national and local best practices to address disproportionality and disparate outcomes for youth.

In 2018, members of the FAC co-facilitated *Seeing RED* with community providers and DCF Area Office Staff. The facilitators provide training, support, and a peer network of individuals to share experiences and reflections. So far the team has conducted screening and discussions in twelve communities.

Additionally, the DYS Metro Region Family Advisory Council (FAC), in partnership with Northeastern University's Institute on Race and Justice, invited the FAC to its *Second Annual Family Advisory Symposium*. The symposium is an all-day community workshop to understand the impact of violence and trauma in communities and to discuss strategies to strengthen families, ourselves and our communities.

Permanency

The FAC continues its work to support families and bring a family voice to DCF on permanency through father engagement, and kinship/grandparent support:

Fatherhood Engagement

As part of the recruitment and retention efforts, the FAC has reached out to recruit fathers and men who have lived experience to add to the diversity of the group. The new members enhanced the group's capacity to provide some direct and comprehensive father engagement work this year:

- Four of the FAC members co-facilitate Nurturing Father programs and Fathers' Support Groups at DCF offices, local Head Start programs, and Family Resource Centers;
- One of the FAC Leadership Team members co-facilitates a module of orientation for new DCF Social Worker staff;
- Eight fathers participate in the Fatherhood Ambassadors Program, an in-service presentation to DCF Area Office staff;
- FAC members actively participate in DCF Area Office Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Teams (FELTs) and the Inter-Agency Fatherhood Work Group; and
- Several Members of the Family Advisory Committee participated in this year's Massachusetts Fatherhood Summit and the New England Fathering Conference.

Sixth Annual Fatherhood Leadership Summit

On September 17, 2018, DCF along with the Inter-Agency Fatherhood Work Group (IFW) convened the sixth annual Massachusetts Fatherhood Leadership Summit. The IFW consists of seven state agency partners including Departments of Youth Services, Transitional Assistance, Housing and Community Development, Public Health, Revenue, Early Education and Care, and the Children's Trust; and the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families; and several family and community representatives. This highly successful event drew a diverse group of participants, including DCF staff, fathers who have had experiences in Massachusetts' systems, and representatives from agencies that work with, and serve, fathers including community organizations and providers, schools, high level leadership and policy representatives from state and federal agencies, and judges from the juvenile and probate courts.

The Summit's theme *Taking Action – Transforming Policies and Pathways to Paternal Partnerships and Family Support* focused on deepening relationships and best practices across disciplines in our work engaging fathers in their children's lives. The forum featured International presentations from Mellow Parenting, a Scottish Organization who researches, develops and implements evidenced-based Parenting Programs.

In addition to hosting the Fatherhood Leadership Summit, the IFW has worked to reconnect with the expanding Father and Family Networks of the Children's Trust. In 2018, the IFW helped connect the Networks with DCF Area Office Fatherhood Engagement, Leadership (FELT) Teams in Regional Forums in the Western, Southern and Boston Regions.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Kinship Care

Opioid use in the Commonwealth has had a significant impact on the lives of grandparents and other relatives raising related children. In the coming year, the FAC will participate in facilitating focus groups and surveys to identify:

- individuals in the Commonwealth raising related children of relatives;
- individuals in the Commonwealth raising grandchildren because one or both of the parents are addicted to an opioid drug;

- resources available to provide services to both the grandparent or other relative caregivers as well as the children; and
- whether such services are coordinated in a manner that is useful to grandparents and other kin.

In 2019, the FAC will launch an effort to support some of the parents that receive limited support from DCF and the Courts, i.e., Grandparents and Kinship Caregivers. The FAC has proposed a Family Representative Program pilot at a few DCF Area Offices. Family Representatives will work with the DCF staff to support and provide guidance for kinship families.

Area Board Support

Many DCF offices, following the 2008 agency reform legislation and its mandate that specified Area Boards, reactivated or initialized their local DCF Area Boards. Some have had sustained membership and are active in their support of the community, others are in need of additional support to activate, engage and maintain their membership in support of the affiliated office and community that is served by the DCF area office. In 2019, the FAC will form a Board Governance Committee to assist the Department with recruitment, retention, and support of Area Board members.

The Board Governance Committee Leadership team met to discuss the proposed actions, supports, and needs. It is the intended purpose of the FAC to:

- Create a framework to guide the development, function and provide support for the 29 DCF Area Advisory Boards
- Collect, maintain and share participation and contact information for DCF Area Advisory Boards
- Assess, plan and deliver statewide training opportunities for Board membership
- Develop and implement an annual statewide summit for Board leadership
- Implement an application support process for all applicants; participate in an appeal process for non-selected applicants

FAC proposes that an annual Statewide Area Advisory Board Summit be scheduled each spring to offer the opportunity for statewide engagement in training and development, fostering inter-board connectivity and to further build connections between DCF leadership and Area Advisory Boards.

The first Annual Board Summit was held in April 2019. The event included an overview of how to form and maintain an Area Advisory Board, financial structures, working with DCF Area Directors, and understanding community resources. Participants also had an opportunity to network and connect with other board leadership.

Pathways for Parents Project

The Pathways for Parents Project (Pathways) was developed in 2003 to form and sustain the collaborative working relationship between the Federation for Children with Special Needs (“The Federation”) and the DCF. Pathways provide a voice for parents in DCF venues and in multi-agency initiatives involving agencies of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and work to build capacity within the Federation to inform staff in their work with parents who also receive services from DCF. The Pathways coordinator also provides training and resources for DCF staff to aid in their work with children and families.

Training and Professional Development

In the past year, FAC members participated in 18 professional and para-professional conferences and over 150 training opportunities related to initiatives on the action plan. These training provide parent education, information on program development, and skill building modules on group dynamics and facilitation. The primary area of training needs this year focused on 2GEN or Two-generation approaches to addressing needs of both children and their adult caregivers together and finding better ways to support Grandparents and Kinship caregivers in the face of the opioid crisis.

FAC members receive a stipend for their time. Through these activities, numerous FAC members have become Certified Facilitators, Master Trainers, and TOT Facilitators and several FAC members receive Continuing Education Unit (CEUs) for their participation.

DCF continues its collaboration with the Commission on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren to provide support to grandparents who have seen their role increase as a primary caregiver. This partnership allows the utilization of grandparents' home as a resource, those facilitating the reunification of a child to a temporary or permanent home.

In 2018, the Commission continued its mission to provide information, resources, and support to grandparents and relative caregivers throughout Massachusetts. The Commission's work is supported by a volunteer board of 13 Commissioners and one staff Director. DCF continued as the Commission's fiscal partner allowing the Commission to move forward with its plans in 2018. Through community workshops, training, legislative and policy advocacy, an annual conference, and daily contact with grandparents and providers by phone or e-mail, the Commission was able to provide support to over 1110 grandparents, relative caregivers, and providers in Massachusetts.

The Commission visited 13 different communities in 2018 and held workshops covering topics such as *How Trauma Impacts Children* and *The Disease of Addiction*. Each workshop also included a panel of statewide and local service providers who were able to share information with families about resources for them and the children they are raising. Approximately 350 grandparents, relative caregivers, and providers attended these workshops. Feedback from families was overwhelmingly positive and the Commission has pledged to continue to provide community workshops throughout Massachusetts in 2019. In addition to community workshops, the Commission held trainings twice in 2018 focused on "How to Create and Sustain a Successful Support Group for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren," which 35 people attended. Finally, the Commission held its annual "Conference for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Community Support Providers". This conference was attended by almost 200 people, 65% of whom were grandparents or other relative caregivers. The Commission was asked to do presentations with 140 community service providers throughout Massachusetts in 2018 and the Director of the Commission met with or presented to, all 140 providers. Outreach increased significantly in 2018 by 30% from 2017 and included 389 contacts by phone or e-mail to the Commission, which often included grandparents looking for access to financial resources, legal information, or support groups. The Commission also worked with the state legislature to file a bill for indigent grandparents to automatically be appointed legal representation during custody disputes in Probate and Family Court. This bill is still pending before the Judiciary Committee..

Adoption Promotion

Over the past five years, the Department, through a focus on providing support designed to encourage more adoption out of foster care system, has taken advantage of opportunities to collaborate with the community

by utilizing Coalitions to support pre-and post-adoptive activities. The activities not only benefit the families but support DCF practices on a more broadly defined continuum of care. Given the multidimensional needs of adoptive parents, it requires a multilevel approach to expedite the adoption process and support families. The Fall River Coalition (United Neighbors of Fall River) partners with DCF and hosts Parent Cafes to address gaps in communication between foster parents and social workers. In Worcester, after a Coalition meeting with DCF to discuss current needs of parents who were a potential resource for adoption, they identified the need for basic needs support for infants. The Worcester Coalition mobilized the community and began hosting *Community Baby Showers*. As a result, the coalition was able to collect donations that are used to provide parents with diapers and other toiletries for infants. Additionally, multiple agencies have been hosting information referral sessions at the Coalition, opening the door for additional resources for parents. In an effort to increase formal supports to adoptive parents, the Department has established contracts with several community agencies that will provide a variety of services. Adoption Journeys provides wrap-around services for families who not only adopt from DCF but private and international agencies, as well. The agency staff has a wealth of knowledge about building relationships and working with family systems. Additionally, the services that are provided in-house span from support groups to recreational activities, child care respite, and intensive family support.

Family Resource Centers

For many years, the system of care and resources for families in Massachusetts were embedded in an intervention model through the courts and the Children Requiring Assistance (CRA) program. A 2012 state law changed this system and led to a shift of resources out of the courts and other governmental entities and into communities. DCF had established a limited number of Family Resource Centers to support a system of care that was community-based allowing families to receive supportive services in their local communities. The Department, using allocated federal funds under the PSSF grant, did an extensive need assessment across the Commonwealth to determine the number and extent to which communities were mostly underserved in order to incubate these new centers. The initiative partnered Community Connections Coalitions and Family Resource Centers to better serve the families in these identified communities.

Since 2015, DCF has expanded the network of FRCs through two models (Full and Micro) that allow for greater capacity and flexibility in providing services to families based on the community population and need. The new generations of FRCs are community-based family support programs working to strengthen families so that parents and their children can thrive and succeed. With 22 locations across the Commonwealth, and two new sites opening in 2019, the FRCs is staffed by people from the community who help parents and children connect to needed services. To date, FRCs has served over 50,000 family members.

Community and Family Engagement Team

The Community and Family Engagement team in the past five years has evolved in several areas. The team significantly contributed to contract management, program development, and support of numerous activities in their respective regions, often leading to system changes. The Community Support Managers (CSMs) have been the ambassadors of the system of care model that has strengthened community-based services. In addition to the technical assistance they provide to programs, they have also developed a rapport with community stakeholders. This relationship has benefited the Department as CSMs are often the bridge that connects child welfare work and community-driven family support.

The team has engaged and participated in several professional development activities including attending the Annual Grantee's Meetings in Washington DC which has allowed them to share innovative practices that are being implemented in Massachusetts and provide them with the opportunity to learn about other best and promising practices being implemented by their peers across the country.

In the last five years, the work of the Community and Family Engagement team has been focused on strengthening practice that is rooted in supporting the building of parental skills and strengthening families. In 2012, the stage was set for multiple system changes to improve programming and practice in MA child welfare courts, education, and community-based services. The framework that has been set is a perfect springboard to launch the next five years of child welfare/community-based partnership.

- We will first assess the overall progress made to date and address the shortfalls in our historical approach.
- We will propose to use PSSF funds as an incubator for innovative program development that responds to emerging or unmet needs and better plan to strategically advocate for system changes. First, we will take an overall accounting of what has worked and identify areas that need improvement.
- We will hold planning strategies with Community Connections Coalitions and better align our efforts at documenting their work by providing tools that result in clearer accountability for producing desired outcomes.
 - First, the revised Action Plan for FY 20 implementation will be based on Protective Factors and PSSF indicators;
 - Second, we will provide updated training opportunities such as the program developed by the University of Connecticut, which supports the development of parents as leaders;
 - Third, we will engage in programs that will yield system changes by providing communities with resources that will allow them to do a better need assessment. The Department is in the process of securing new technology that will allow for heat mapping of the state, identifying “hot spots” for prevention work that may help predict areas where the likelihood of high rate of child maltreatment may occur;
 - Fourth, we will collaborate with innovative programs such as *Mothers Against Violence*, providing seed money to help pilot the program in local neighborhoods;
 - Fifth, we will use the resources to reactivate sound practices that produce and have produced positive system change such as the inclusion of the voices of family members who have been through the system as partners to new families who are new to the system, or families whose child has been removed; and
 - Sixth, we will look at the recommendations from the Family First Act, collaborate with the Kinship Navigator program, and explore the possibility providing a train-the-trainer event for facilitators to establish and embed the Reimagining Juvenile Justice model in the core training for DCF field staff.

PATCH

The PATCH framework and its approach to practice development linked the goals of the state child welfare agency in a community-embedded child welfare model. DCF has expanded the approach to connect with other agencies with areas of similar interest in communities that focus on tangible, concrete issues related to safety, permanency, and well-being. However with the agency refocus on improving and strengthening internal child protective practice, the PATCH approach that became the way of connecting Area Offices with community work will need to be re-assessed in order to be a vital agent for system change.

Prioritization of the next generation of prevention programs must be on the same level of child protective practice in order to support a system of care with the necessary breadth and depth that will encourage families to take advantage of localized services. Families, not the state, can and should be the primary caregivers of their children.

Final Expenditure Report for FFY 17 Funds

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF) grant dollars continue to allow DCF to pilot innovative responses to emerging needs on a scale that otherwise would be difficult to accomplish systemically. This approach has given us an opportunity to “try before we buy” – incorporating lessons learned during pilot development and implementation into a cogent, scalable program model more likely to attract support with state service dollars. The Substance Abuse Engagement program, which we piloted as part of the agency’s initial Program Improvement Plan using PSSF discretionary dollars, continued in three DCF Northern Region area offices. It is now completely supported with state dollars through Family Networks.

In 1994, when these grant funds initially became available to states, Massachusetts was explicit in its intent to build a strong community infrastructure that would result in a fundamental shift in how the child welfare system related to families and communities. We continue to view this as a long-term change strategy - one that is yielding tangible results.

As we described in the body of the Five Year Child and Family Services Plan and this year’s Annual Progress and Services Review (APSR), Massachusetts invests a significant portion of these grant funds to support Community Connections Coalitions in high-risk neighborhoods across the Commonwealth. Originally, these coalitions were envisioned primarily as family support entities in a traditional sense. Over time, they have evolved to also address the needs of families in the community who are involved with the Department as recipients of services. These include services to families whose children are in foster placement with a goal of returning home, support and enrichment activities for children in foster care, remedial experiences for families where escalating crises pose a significant risk of placement of the children, and foster and adoptive family recruitment grounded in the community, and initiated by community members themselves.

Several cases illustrate the intertwined and evolutionary nature of this work. One such example is the partnership that has developed between the Community Connections coalition, MSPCC’s Connecting Families Program and the DCF Area Offices in the cities of Worcester and Fall River. Connecting Families provides outreach services to families where DCF has “screened out” reports of child abuse or neglect. It offers a preventive alternative to the more traditional avenue of families having to “fail up” before child welfare services are provided. Originally, MSPCC envisioned having challenges in handling demand for these services due to a flood of DCF referrals and “pull” for services by families. The actual experience initially was the opposite. Identifying potential families for referral by the area office was difficult as was engagement with those families who were referred. The expansion of the partnership to include the Worcester Community Connections Coalition ultimately was key in shifting this dynamic to a positive one. The Family Support Advocate and outreach staff of the coalition capitalized upon their relationships with both the office and families to address systemic barriers which impeded social workers from identifying and referring families early on and to help Connecting Families staff to tailor their engagement and outreach activities to better meet the diverse needs of families in the greater Worcester community.

The Worcester Community Connections Coalition expanded this work with families in the community by opening a Parent Resource Center. In the past two years, the early promise of it becoming a magnet to families from all parts of the city has been realized. As a result, DCF chose the Worcester site to be one of four Family Resource Center “proof of concept” sites in the spring of 2010 – continuing the testament of the

relevance of the coalition to the community. Community Connections Coalitions will continue to be the foundation upon which we intend to expand community-based Family Resource Centers in the future.

In other parts of the state, the impact of Community Connections on other PSSF program areas has been similar. The Foster Care Task Force of the New Bedford Community Connections Coalition was formed as a community response to the perception that children in foster care were not provided with the same access to the kinds of opportunities afforded other children in the community. Activities originally were focused on fundraising to provide enrichment activities to children in foster care. The Task Force learned early on that providing support to the youth in care also meant supporting foster families. This naturally progressed to helping support retention and expansion of fostering resources in the greater New Bedford area. In the ensuing years, the work of the Task Force has dramatically expanded to include development of a comprehensive strategy for neighborhood recruitment, which, for all practical purposes, has resulted in a melding of our agency foster and adoptive recruitment activities with our community capacity-building infrastructure, at least in this one community.

The work of the New Bedford Task Force has firmly taken hold in the neighboring community of Fall River, expanded to include Cape Cod and began to spread to other areas of the state. Fall River developed a template of recruitment materials that is easily modified to incorporate local information and made it available to the network of Community Connections coalitions. It effectively balances the need for having a statewide recruitment branding identity along with the kind of information that makes a campaign relevant for local communities - producing a win-win for everyone involved. Our joint planning work with our internal DCF foster care and adoption recruitment staff to strategically build linkages at community and regional levels continue to produce discernible results from these partnerships.

In 2009, we began broadening the work to include testing a planning framework by which coalitions, with their DCF Area Office partners, convene community forums on a specific issue related to safety, permanency or well-being. We were particularly interested in looking at issues that may be related to substance abuse, mental health, or domestic violence and using these forums as an opportunity to develop targeted responses that cross these multiple disciplines. In the fall of 2008, our first large-scale project was in response to a request from the Worcester Community Connections Coalition for targeted technical assistance. We funded a consultant to facilitate a community-based process to address an issue brought to the coalition by a group of mothers in the community who experienced a lack of response by the domestic violence services agencies, including the court system. The time-limited planning process resulted in an action plan to implement concrete changes in both the shelter system and recommendations for court system improvements.

In 2010, DCF partnered with the MA Children's Trust Fund, and Departments of Early Education and Care and Public Health in a subsequently awarded Strengthening Families AIM grant. Community Connections Coalitions and Family Resource Centers were key implementation points in our state strategy and were part of the initial training population included in the expansion of Parent Café work in 2012.

Given the ongoing integration of the work of the Coalitions with the work of the Department, the vast majority of the \$3.1 million in PSSF funds provided to the Coalitions is used to fund services and activities that cross one or more service categories. However, DCF still relies on PSSF grant funds as support for preventive Family Support programs due to a relatively small pool of state Purchase of Service (POS) dollars dedicated for this purpose. In SFY 2014, the State had annual expenditures in excess of \$53 million in POS dollars for Family Networks Support and Stabilization Services (FNSS) which is inclusive of Family Preservation and Adoption Support Services, but does not include any direct service personnel costs in these programmatic areas. In addition, for FY 14, the State targeted over \$1.4 million in State funds for time-limited reunification services and over \$14 million of State funds for crisis intervention services. Given the high level of State funds used to support various types of reunification services over the past

several years, DCF has found that it is able to meet the demand for time-limited reunification services with the level of IV-B funds proposed.

We are of the understanding that the maintenance of effort level of \$41.7M dollars was established in 1993 using reports submitted by DCF to the Regional Office, for all non-placement services expenditures in 1992.

In its June 2016 APSR, DCF proposed planning to spend approximately 35% of its total available FFY 17 PSSF grant funds in Family Support Services, followed by 20% in Family Preservation Services 16% in Adoption Promotion and Support, 10% in Time Limited Family Reunification Services, 9% in Administration, and 10% in Planning/Other Service Related Activities. In actuality, it spent approximately 37.3% of its total available FFY 17 PSSF grant funds in Family Support Services, followed by 20% in Family Preservation Services 15.4% in Adoption Promotion and Support, 9.7% in Time Limited Family Reunification Services, 9% in Administration, and 8.6% in Planning/Other Service Related Activities. The slight variation in spending can be primarily attributed to a growth on the reliance on PSSF funds to support parent stipends related to expanded family engagement activities and the expansion of parenting education programs.

We expect that model programs implemented with these funds will continue to yield tangible results for families as well as serving as learning labs to inform continued program development on a broader scale – all without investments of additional federal dollars. As local partnerships with DCF both deepen and expand, we expect a continuing evolution of these kinds of creative service responses that meet the intent of the legislation and, more critically, the needs of families in communities across the Commonwealth.

MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISIT FORMULA GRANTS

DCF has reported on caseworker monthly visits since 1986. Regular caseworker visits are an expectation of our social workers and also a best practice that strengthens and builds critical relationships between the caseworker and the consumer.

As stated in the five year 2015-2019 Child and Family Report Services Plan (CFSP), DCF intended to use the Federal Caseworker Visit Funds to address gaps and support systematic changes to improve the quality and frequency of caseworker visits. Also in 2015, the Department began a larger system overhaul that led to policy and training changes in FY 2015. Many of these changes were identified in a report by the Child Welfare League of America. The Department's first steps were to review existing policies and evaluate how they impacted practice. The Department identified several policies that required revision and further negotiation prior to implementation. Each policy needed to clearly articulate a clear strategy that improved and strengthened the quality of caseworker visits. As a result, the following policies were identified as needed revision:

- Supervision Policy
- Policy Regarding Missing or Absent Children in the Department Care or Custody
- In-Home Policy
- Case Closing Policy
- Family Assessment Action Plan
- Protective Intake
- Permanency Planning

DCF recognizes that addressing policies is only the first step to implement system-wide changes. In order to execute and implement practices that enhance home visits, additional resources are needed. The Department used the Monthly Caseworker Visit grant funds to invest in worker training and also improve support to young families with infants by providing “Welcome Baby Bags” to these families. These bags, which contain useful information about infants as well as key supplies (pacifiers, swaddling blankets, etc.) are a concrete service that promotes healthy development and well-being of children. Additionally, DCF focused on practice changes to monitor and improve the quality and frequency of visits, which includes:

- A dashboard that allows caseworker and supervisor to have real-time information regarding consumers who are due for a visit.
- Electronic support in the form of iPads connected to the DCF database (iFamily Net) to allow workers to upload consumer contacts more easily and supervisors the ability to instantly review the information.
- Through the Child Welfare Institute (CWI), worker, supervisors and managerial staff may access relevant e-learning and classroom instruction.

Additionally, the Department identified the need for additional caseworkers to reduce caseloads. Over the past several years, state funds were allocated to hire additional staff.

The Field Guide for Social Workers has required extensive updating and is still in the process of being rewritten. While DCF did not fully spend all grant funds allocated to staff training, mentoring and coaching, the Department is working to ensure that the total number of monthly caseworker visit is at least 95%. Through the AILT process, dashboards are in place to support Area Office problem solving strategies designed to increase the frequency and quality of social worker visits. Updates’ on each Area Office’s progress meeting this goal is shared with DCF’s leadership team weekly and significant progress has been made since September 2018. The Department has made concerted efforts to track caseworker visits on a daily/weekly/monthly basis. As such, DCF has evidenced significant improvement in monthly caseworker visit performance. As of April 2019, 91.9% of all children 0-17 years of age were visited, and 94.5% of children in placement were visited by their social worker.

The Department has standards in place for the content and frequency of visits for children in out of home placement. The Ongoing Casework and Documentation Policy (#86-011) requires that all children in out of home placement be seen on a monthly basis. This policy also requires documentation of the visit to occur in the Department’s SACWIS system (FamilyNet) no later than 30 days following the visit. The Department’s SACWIS system contains the necessary data elements to document and track visits. The Department has created real time reports and tracking tools to assist social workers, supervisors and managers in ensuring children are seen timely.

Additionally, the Family Assessment and Action Planning Policy, Permanency Planning Policy, Supervision Policy, Foster Care Review Policy and Children who are Missing or Absent Policy provide additional guidance, support and oversight for ensuring monthly visits occur in a purposeful manner, focused on safety, permanency and well-being. The Department emphasizes policy and practice standards for child and family contacts in New Social Worker training delivered upon hire, through ongoing trainings offered statewide and through supervision, coaching and clinical support from supervisors, clinical managers, directors and implementation coaches.

The Department is also developing a new more robust curriculum for new social workers that will include a focus on family engage, interviewing, observation and related skills that will support high quality child and family visitation. That curriculum will be finalized and tested in late 2019.

CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

DCF administers the Chafee Foster Program for Successful Transitions to Adulthood to support an array of services with the objectives of preparing youth and young adults ages 14-21 for successful transitions to adulthood, including developing permanent connections to caring and committed adults. The components of the Chafee funded services focus on safety and the many facets of well-being. Educational achievement, life skill mastery, and successful community integration with permanent connections to family and/or other caring enduring relationships with adults are the goals for our youth.

The Chafee funded programs are based on the principles of positive youth development and address each of the purpose areas of the Program:

- Help youth transition from dependency to self-sufficiency.
- Help youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment.
- Help youth prepare for, enter and succeed in post-secondary training and educational institutions.
- Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentor-type relationships and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults.
- Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support services to former foster care youth ages 18-21 to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to ensure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition to adulthood.
- Make ETV funds for education and training, including post-secondary education, available to youth who meet eligibility requirements.
- Provide services to youth who, after attaining age 16, have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption.
- Ensure that children who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18 have regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities.

The programming has been developed and refined with input from a variety of stakeholders including foster youth, foster care alumni, DCF staff, provider staff, foster parents, other Massachusetts state agencies, and post-secondary institutions serving transition age youth and young adults. An enhanced focus on transitional housing supports as well as public and private collaborations, particularly for youth employment, is noted in later sections of the report.

Description of Program Design and Delivery

The Department has designed programming to address the varied service needs of the youth and young adults in the agency's care and/or custody. This programming is supported by the Department's Foster Child Bill of Rights (2009) and the Sibling Bill of Rights (2012) which support the goals of permanency, positive youth development, and life skills attainment. The DCF's Permanency Planning Policy encourages permanency, sibling connections, and extended voluntary care for transition age youth to support optimal goal achievement.

Adolescent Outreach Program

The Adolescent Outreach Program delivers intensive, individualized life skill assessment and training to current foster youth and young adults ages 14-21 from across the state to assist them in developing necessary relationships, skills, and supports to achieve their potential. Per grant guidelines, program services are also available to youth who were guardianshiped or adopted from DCF after age 16 and to former foster youth who discharged from DCF between ages 18-21.

Outreach services seek to address each of the purpose areas of the Chafee Program: assisting youth with life skill development, access to education, vocational training and other services necessary to obtain employment, support through connections to family, including siblings and lifelong supports.

The services provided are specific to the needs of each individual, including LGBTQ youth and young adults. Staff members participate in training and professional development to ensure that our services affirm the cultural, sexual orientation, and gender identities of our youth/young adults.

The Outreach staffs also assist youth with planning for and succeeding in post-secondary educational settings as well as vocational training programming. These efforts are supported by ETV program staff who are dedicated to facilitating the transition to post-secondary education as well as supporting students through the duration of their academic programs until they receive their degree.

Strength-Based Approach

Outreach Program staff support youth and young adults to identify and pursue long and short term goals. The strength-based approach and focus on youth engagement with a positive youth development foundation have enabled the staff to successfully engage youth in the service. Feedback from the youth and young adults served confirms that this model is a significant factor in the program's success. This same strength-based approach has inspired the Department's internship program as well as the ETV support model. DCF believes that youth and young adults are essential partners in their own goal setting, service planning, and life skill training, a key factor which facilitates their successful transitions into the community. Youth and young adults are encouraged to practice newly acquired skills and utilize problem-solving techniques effectively within a safety net of adult supervision and support. Assisting youth in identifying their educational/vocational goals and developing strategies to realize their potential are critical tasks for program staff.

Youth are also supported in handling mistakes, disappointments, and failures. Overarching goals are to equip youth to live a successful life with long term, personal connections within the community. Outreach strives to help youth develop self-advocacy skills and to experience adolescent and young adult milestones in a healthy, normative way. Through focused discussions on decision-making/problem-solving, community-based activities and goal-focused skill-building tasks, youth work to develop the skills necessary to cope with the challenges of adulthood and live self-sufficiently in their communities. Adolescent Outreach staff works closely with the DCF primary case managing social workers, foster parents, congregate care providers, community service providers and adults important to the youth to offer opportunities for youth and young adults to learn life skills through practical activities and achievements in their communities – making efforts to normalize their experiences. The Department administers the Chafee-funded Life Skills Support Program which pays for such items as bus passes, laptops, camperships, sport team dues/uniforms, high school senior dues, etc.

CFCIP Services Across the State

The services funded with the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transitions to Adulthood funds are available to eligible youth and young adults across the state. In area offices where there is not an Adolescent Outreach worker assigned, the Regional Outreach Supervisor will provide access to Chafee funded services and supports.

The Chafee funded services are the same in each of the 5 regions of the state. The particular focus of the services is based on the individual youth/young adult's needs. Former foster youth ages 18-21 are offered the same Chafee services as those under age 18. Former foster youth who leave DCF care after

attaining age 18 may access Outreach services and other Chafee Program funded services, i.e. internships, discharge support, assistance with educational services.

Youth Served

From July 2018 to May 2019, the Outreach staff served 1209 youth and young adults. Of these, 438 youth and young adults received or are presently receiving intensive, weekly individualized life skill assessment to identify their strengths, life skills training to address their needs, as well as assistance in developing and strengthening lifelong connections to caring adults. These services support the youth in mastering the skills they will need to live successfully in the community upon discharge from agency care. The other 771 youth and young adults received assistance from Outreach staff to assist with job search, education, financial aid/college applications, housing support, MassHealth applications, and referral/resource information.

The Outreach Program focuses its work with youth/young adults in Departmental foster care, kinship care, those who are receiving Young Adult Support Payments and youth eligible for guardianship/adoption. Contracts require that youth/young adults in Comprehensive Foster Care or congregate care are provided similar life skill preparatory services in their placements. To avoid duplication of services, the Outreach workers generally do not work intensively with youth while they are in these placements unless a social worker specifically requests the additional support. Also, per Chafee Program guidelines, youth/young adults who received Outreach services may return for intensive or short-term focused services at any time prior to age 21.

Generally, youth/young adults are referred to the Outreach Program by the primary case managing social worker. Outreach workers also identify prospective clients by reviewing a report of youth in placement provided by the DCF Office of Management, Planning, and Analysis. The weekly intensive model focuses primarily on the needs of youth/young adults ages 16 and older for two reasons: present staffing levels would not currently support the expansion of services to youth ages 14 and 15 and youth in those age brackets are typically a better fit for less intensive Outreach support and other departmental programming. However, the Outreach staffs do serve 15-year-olds when their needs may be met by the program. The PAYA life skills curriculum is available to all youth in DCF placements age 14 and older.

The average age of youth receiving Outreach weekly service is 18 years old. The vast majority, of the youth on the active caseload as of May 2019, was open for case management and placement services with DCF. These young adults include self-referrals and those referred to the program by community service agencies, former foster parents, DCF social workers, etc. Less than 10% percent of the active Outreach cases were closed with DCF, and no longer living in DCF placement.

Eligibility for Chafee-funded services remains the same for youth/young adults whether they are open with DCF for placement, former foster youth who left DCF after attaining age 18 or left DCF placement after age 16 for guardianship or adoption. The referrals to the Outreach Program for the youth in guardianship or adoptions are less frequent.

Staffing and Service Overview

Overall program management is provided by the Director of Adolescent Services. The Outreach Workers are assigned to an area office. In some instances of smaller offices, the Outreach Worker covers 2 offices. The Outreach Supervisors cover an assigned region. The Outreach staff provides weekly service to the youth and young adults on their Active Caseload. When appropriate, youth and young adults move off of Active status and are put on tracking status for 6 months, where contact moves from weekly to monthly to provide any needed support. There are currently 29 full-time equivalent positions in the Adolescent Services Unit. Chafee supports 21 of these positions. Twelve of these positions are

full-time Outreach Workers, Five are Regional Outreach Supervisors. Two are Post- Secondary Specialists and 2 are Fiscal Literacy/Credit Specialists.

Determining Eligibility for Benefits and Services (Section 477 (b) (2) (E) of the Act)

Massachusetts DCF uses the Chafee Program guidelines and criteria for program participation to determine which youth and young adults are eligible for services. DCF also provides Chafee services for eligible youth/young adults from other states who are temporarily living in Massachusetts or attending college in the Commonwealth as well as those who have moved to MA after discharging from another state at or after age 18. Youth ages 14 and older in out of home placement and young adults ages 18-21 who are in DCF care or have discharged from care have access to Chafee benefits and services.

Outcomes

The achievements over the last few years have been fairly consistent. The youth/young adults who engage in Outreach services are generally successful in reaching their educational and employment goals as well as attaining permanent connections with family and community. Given these positive outcomes, DCF plans to continue the service and obtain ongoing feedback from the youth/young adults for any recommendations for improvement.

Educational Outcomes

- 22% of the Outreach caseload will graduate high school in May 2019
- 13% of the Outreach caseload are still enrolled in high school in May 2019
- 40% were enrolled in a post-secondary program
- <10% completed vocational training certificate programs
- <10% are enrolled in a GED program

Employment

- 26% of the youth were employed full-time
- 46% of the youth were employed part- time
- 14% were enrolled in a career center or other WIA funded employment program

Permanency

- 80% of the youth have a connection to a biological parent
- 95% of the youth have a connection to siblings and/or extended family

Efforts to Provide Developmentally Appropriate Services/Activities for Foster Youth

The Department understands the importance of providing services and supports to foster youth that is developmentally appropriate and allows the youth to engage in similar activities as their non-foster care peers. The following services/programs were provided to address this goal.

Life Skill Curriculum

The Department's own life skill curriculum, Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA), has been successfully used by the foster parents, congregate care programs and comprehensive contracted foster care agencies for more than 20 years to help ensure continuity in the life skills training for youth in out-of-

home placement. The components of the PAYA curriculum include five (4) life skills modules, each of which incorporates a number of related skill areas as described below:

- Module 1: Money, Home and Food Management
- Module 2: Personal Care, Health, Safety and Decision-Making
- Module 3: Education, Job Seeking and Job Maintenance
- Module 4: Housing, Transportation, Community Resources, Laws and Recreation

The Adolescent Services staff provided life skills and youth development training statewide this past year. There were 7 PAYA certification trainings across the state this year and 3 trainings on supporting foster youth in post-secondary education. All DCF staff contracted and state agencies, community partners, and foster parents are invited to attend these trainings which address the use of the curriculum and the implementation of the program services. The training presents strategies for working with adolescents around readiness for community living and teaching a wide range of life skills. The practice of the newly acquired life skills well as the inclusion of activities of normalcy whenever possible are essential components of this work with youth. Transition planning and the after-care needs of youth are also addressed in the training.

The Department's Permanency Planning Policy (effective July 1, 2013) requires all Comprehensive Foster Care (CFC) contracted providers and congregate care providers to complete the Youth Readiness Assessment Tool for the same population of youth and young adults specified above. Foster parents, providers, and staff are encouraged to integrate the information and activities suggested in the modules into the daily learning opportunities for youth in their care. The PAYA incentive program (discussed below) is also available to these youth.

The Department met its 2014 CFSP goal to more broadly distribute The PAYA (Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood) Life Skills curriculum. The Readiness Assessment Tool along with the curriculum is now being distributed to providers and foster parents on flash drives. Both are also available electronically via the DCF Intranet to facilitate life skills preparation work with youth.

PAYA Incentive Program

Since the implementation of the PAYA Program, the Department has utilized incentives to reward youth for their successful completion of a skill module, encourage their development of self-esteem, and empower them to continue their efforts of enhancing their life skills. The youth also learn to set goals for themselves and work toward the achievement of these goals – as well as the tangible reward of the incentive. In order to qualify for an incentive, a youth must demonstrate competency in the skills addressed in the individual life skill module. Youth may request \$50 for a life skill related item or a one-time payment of \$500 toward driver education training. In order to increase access to driver's education programs, the PAYA incentive program increased its driver's education incentive award from \$300 to \$500. From June 2018 to May 2019, DCF processed PAYA 300 incentive requests on behalf of 267 youth participating in the program. The total amount awarded was \$100,000.

Life Skills Support Program

The Department is committed to facilitating youths' connection to school and community activities and utilizes Chafee Program funds for this purpose through the Life Skills Support Program. Life Skill Support Program funds are used for a variety of positive youth development activities such as team athletics/uniforms, senior class expenses, SAT prep courses, high school activity fees, short-term transportation, computers, etc. Between July 2018 and May 2019, DCF funded 1009 foster youth and

young adults a Life Skills Support payment. Total spending during this timeframe in this program was \$510,600.

Employment

The Department has continued its partnership with Cantella, Inc., a Boston financial services firm. Cantella continues to host Career Nights for foster youth. Professionals from a variety of careers including nursing, finance, education, law enforcement, computer science, entrepreneurship, human resources and the law present information about their work and answer questions the youth. Youth receive advice on resume development, interview tips, networking and much more.

Adolescent Outreach staff has collaborated with local Workforce Investment Boards in the Southern Northern, and Greater Boston Regions of Massachusetts. Outreach Workers participate in Workforce Investment Boards and are able to connect youth with WIA funded employment services that have resulted in DCF youth gaining both seasonal and year-long part-time and full-time employment.

This year the Department has continued its development of a partnership with private businesses and community-based organizations to provide internship opportunities for DCF youth with the goal of assisting youth to develop job skills and gain exposure to careers in which they have expressed an interest. Such access to internships is a developmentally appropriate resource for foster youth, particularly as the Outreach staff provides the support in helping the youth/young adult identify their area of interest as well as potential placement sites. The Outreach staffs provide on-going supervision – meeting with the youth/young adult weekly -assessing the youth's current employment skills and providing support around job readiness in areas such as appropriate dress, workplace ethics, time management and transportation. Outreach workers can also support the internship supervisors to address any needs or concerns that may arise during the placement. Staffs use the PAYA Life Skill Curriculum Module 3 to assist youth with employment readiness skills.

DCF youth are paid a stipend by the Department (Chafee funds) for their participation in this program. The average youth initially works 40 hours with an opportunity for a 40-hour extension. The youth receives an \$8 an hour stipend. The internship program has been a great way to introduce youth to a vocational or professional work setting and motivate them to continue with their educational goals. As of May 2019, 42 youth were matched with internship placements. Total spending in the internship program was \$15,756. Some of the internships this year included museums, childcare centers, churches, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, barber shops and hair salons, summer camps, and a financial services firm. The job market in Massachusetts has been strong, affording many youths the opportunity to be employed. In FY20, the internship program will be modified to allow youth to participate by working alternative hours or to combine learning related work and professional mentorship opportunities with their paying jobs. As the minimum wage in Massachusetts is now \$12 an hour, the internship stipend will be raised to \$10 an hour.

Housing Support, Room and Board Assistance, Homelessness Prevention

Many of the young adults reaching age 18-years-old in DCF custody/care chooses to sign a Voluntary Placement Agreement with the agency to continue in care. The state provides the funding for placements for youth/young adults ages 18 and older – either in foster care, or Comprehensive Foster Care (contracted) or independent living programs. In addition, the DCF utilizes the state-funded Young Adult Support Payments to directly provide room and board funding to young adults who are determined by DCF to be responsible and able to safely manage these funds. As of December 31, 2018, there were 2090 young adults age 18 and older receiving agency voluntary care.

As the Chafee Program funds cannot be used to support the room and board costs for foster youth in agency custody/care, and DCF provides voluntary care and placement for so many young adults age 18 and older, the Department uses less than 30% of its allotment of the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program for room and board payments. However, DCF utilizes Chafee funds for the Discharge Support Program.

The Discharge Support Program, managed by the Adolescent Services Unit of DCF, supports start-up costs (i.e. first month's rent, security deposit, essential furniture, household items, bedding, etc.) for young adults who have left agency care and are in need of such support. These are the expenses that DCF considers room and board payments for former foster youth. This past year from June 2018 to May 2019 74 young adults received discharge payments for housing and related expenses totaling \$81,155.00. Funds may be paid directly to the young adult or to the landlord. If the young adult's behaviors are such that providing money without his/her willingness to work with Outreach staff would likely jeopardize the youth's safety, then the young adult is informed of the program and given contact information so that he/she may call at any time and request assistance in the future.

Below is a summary of the housing supports offered through state and federal housing funds, DCF, as well as donated supports.

- *Voluntary Placement Agreement and Options* - The Department's Permanency Planning Policy mirrors the Fostering Connections guidelines for continuation in voluntary care. DCF encourages youth who attain age 18 in custody or care to request continued care with the Department to pursue their educational and/vocational training and access the services they need to reach their potential as participating citizens. The Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) that both the youth and the agency staff must sign has been modified to allow for agreements between the young adult and DCF and to specify the expectations of continued care. This new form also includes a reference to the Health Care Proxy and the annual credit reviews.

In addition to foster care and congregate care placements for youth ages 18 and older, the Department provides Young Adult Support Payments directly to young adults that DCF staffs believe are responsible and able to live in an approved placement (i.e. college dormitory, apartment with or without roommates). Via this provision, young adults receive a stipend to fund their living costs and daily expenses. These youth are most often either attending an educational program or are training for a job/career. DCF social workers provide case management services. The area office Adolescent Outreach Worker may assist with supervision and support. As of April 2019, there were 767 young adults statewide who were receiving Young Adult Support Payments.

- *Sisters of Charity* - DCF has continued its partnership with the Sisters of Charity serving females age 18 and older from foster care with housing services. The Bachand Residence for Girls is an ideal example of collaboration and the valuable support that caring members of the community can offer to young adults preparing to transition to adulthood. The Sisters are responding to the community need for safe, stable housing for DCF post-secondary students who are attending a community college or vocational training programs which do not offer housing accommodations. The Sisters of Charity rent DCF students private rooms in a previously vacant wing of their building. In addition to their own rooms, the young women have a kitchen and dining area, a lounge, computer room, laundry and storage area. This past year, 16 young women have been residents at Bachand Hall.
- *Paige Street Apartments* - The Lowell Area office of DCF has also collaborated with community housing advocates and a developer to create a housing program for young men in the Lowell area, Paige Street Apartments. The program includes 10 one bedroom apartments. Nine of the apartments are reserved for DCF young adults ages 18 and older in voluntary care and receiving Young Adult Support Payments, and one room is for the Resident Advisor (RA).

- *Outreach* - Outreach staff members maintain contact with local/regional transitional living programs and shelters, including those funded via the federal grants to identify youth/young adults who may be eligible for our Chafee funded services.
- *Family Unification Program* - Since 2009, DCF and the MA Department of Housing and Community Development have jointly applied to HUD for Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers— a portion of which has been assigned for "transition age" youth. These vouchers are limited to an 18 month period, unlike the standard FUP vouchers. Since 2009, we have maintained 28 vouchers for the transition age youth. Outreach staff is assigned to work with each recipient to support them with educational pursuits, money management, employment, housing and other needs that may arise. The young adults must be eligible for Chafee funding; however, they do not have to be in the voluntary care of DCF.

Youth Transitioning to Success Program (YTTSP)

The Department of Housing and Community Development and DCF partnered to develop the Youth Transitioning to Success Program (YTTSP) following feedback from focus groups of young adults who participated in the Family Unification Program (FUP) for transition age youth as well as input from DCF Outreach staff. This program was implemented in 2011 and expanded in 2017. Some of the features are subsidized rent; a special needs account for approved emergency expenses as well as an escrow account to assist youth to save for the future. A significant difference from the Family Unification Program is the rental structure. Participants receive rental assistance based on the fair market value of the area where they will be residing. The young adult will be responsible for paying the differential payment in rent, and all utilities. Rent is not dependent upon the participant's income, allowing her/him to save money. The first year 80% of the rent is paid for the young adult; 65% is paid in year two, and 50% is paid in year three. The participants are required to be enrolled in a post-secondary degree program/vocational training program and to work at least 12 hours weekly. YTTSP also includes assigned DCF Adolescent Outreach workers to assist the young adults with managing the responsibilities of money management, education, employment and housing. This year the program served 22 young adults.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

Massachusetts has met the compliance standards of NYTD since the implementation of the program. The staff who participated with the NYTD effort, the Youth Advisory Boards, agency management team and other stakeholders has been apprised of the review schedule as well as reported outcomes.

- DCF has shared the NYTD data with statewide managers and executive leadership to continue assessment of the implementation of the Permanency Planning Policy and our efforts to support permanency, life skills development, and safety for all foster youth. Discussions continue regarding all the data components of the survey.
- DCF has shared the NYTD survey outcomes and information with the Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni, the Joint Youth Advisory Committee, and local Area Boards. Discussions continue on strategies to maintain focus and positive outcomes for permanency, education, employment readiness/work experience and overall well-being for our foster youth.
- NYTD outcome data has been shared with members of the Youth Advisory Boards since the initial data was available. At the 2018 Youth Leadership Academy in July 2018, Youth Advisory Board Members reported on the experience of participating in the survey process as well as on ideas to engage more out of care youth to take the survey.

- DCF has continued its effort to improve NYTD data collection using a variety of opportunities such as provider meetings and internal agency forums to inform and remind staff, foster parents and providers of the importance of assisting the agency in accessing the youth/young adults to administer the surveys. Outcome data has been shared and discussed at these meetings and forums. In September 2018, DCF made two technological upgrades to its NYTD survey process. In the first, a link to the NYTD survey was made more easily accessible via the www.mass.gov website as part of its overall improvement plan. Second, the NYTD survey was ported over into DCF's web-based case management application, i-Familynet. This change made it possible for Adolescent Outreach Workers and other staff to enter NYTD surveys from their state-issued iPads or other mobile devices, increasing the number of surveys recorded.
- NYTD data has been made available to agency partners. It has been particularly useful to the housing and homelessness community as they respond to HUD NOFA's that identify transition age foster youth as a target population.

Collaboration with Youth and Other Programs

On an ongoing basis, the Department seeks input in planning and refining Chafee services from the members of the Regional Youth Advisory Boards, youth serving providers, and the Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni. Members of the Youth Boards and the Alumni Association also participate in CSFR reviews and NYTD efforts. This year, planning meetings and networking events have taken place between the DCF Youth Advisory Board and members of the Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni. The group has formed a Joint Youth Advisory Committee so that professional adults from the Alumni Network and Youth Advisory Board Members who have recently experienced care can support the work of one another and jointly assist DCF to strengthen its programs.

Youth Advisory Boards

Presently, there are 35 youth/young adult members of the DCF Regional Youth Advisory Boards who also serve on the Joint Youth Advisory Committee. The mission of this group is to promote positive outcomes for future foster youth through their voice, advocacy, and action. They provide recommendations to the Department on services, policy and practice. Additionally, they want to ensure that foster youth are known for their strengths, achievements, and goals. Board members meet monthly, and representatives from each regional board gather 3-4 times per year to form a statewide board and serve on the Joint Youth Advisory Committee.

The Youth Advisory Board achievements this year and future planned activities are described below:

- Members provide feedback on a number of issues relevant to the Department. This year they met with the DCF Commissioner and the Director of Foster Care Review to discuss new policy and its impact on the young adult age group.
- Board members provide support to area office Youth Panels – at times meeting with foster youth turning age 18 who are considering signing on with DCF under voluntary care. The Board members discuss the value of continuing in care after age 18, setting goals and working to achieve them. The Panel also meets with youth who have discharged from care and are requesting to return.
- Members assisted in the planning and delivery of the 2018 Youth Leadership Academy which took place in July 2018. Planning efforts are underway for a Foster Youth Wellness and Self Care Conference in June 2019.

- The Central Region Board members participated in Foster Parent Support events by partnering with younger foster children for activities during the events, allowing foster parents to fully engage in the adult activities of the day and allowing foster children the benefit of mentorship.
- Members of all the regional Boards continue to participate in MAPP trainings and regional recruitment events, sharing their experiences to help train and recruit Foster and Adoptive families.
- Members assisted with the Education Open Houses at the area offices for younger foster youth interested in post-secondary education.
- Joint Youth Advisory Committee Members continue to participate in trainings, including Pre-Service training for social workers and supervisors to talk about the needs of youth in DCF care/custody.
- Members have provided feedback to the state Department of Housing and Community Development on the current subsidized and supportive housing programs developed in partnership with DCF. One positive outcome has been the creation of a third housing program for young adults attending college full time – the Youth Transitioning to Success Program – College Track. Board Members who have participated in these housing programs are now part of the preparation and referral process for new consumers. When a new youth is referred to the program, they are connected to a Member who will discuss the strengths and challenges of the program. Some Members also invite new youth and their Outreach Worker to see their apartment setting to help them visualize the care model and decide if they want to move forward in the program.

The Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni

The Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni, initiated and funded through DCF, has continued to grow this past year. Its purpose is to illuminate the diverse needs of alumni of foster care in the state by advocating for appropriate services and supports, by promoting a healthy peer community, and by developing opportunities for service and leadership. The Network's Advisory Board has a strong representation of foster care alumni. The bylaws require 51 percent of the Board have experience in foster care. With its 501c3 certification, the Association is better positioned to raise funds and eventually become independent of agency funding. The annual Thanksgiving Dinner for foster youth alumni was held in November 2018- offering alumni the opportunity to network with one another and learn more about the opportunities the Massachusetts NFCA offers. Each year the membership grows and the activities expand across the state providing foster care alumni many opportunities to connect with one another and benefit from the community of support. The NFCA has engaged the City of Boston to establish foster care awareness week.

Collaboration with Other Private and Public Agencies

- DCF maintains its participation in the New England Youth Collaborative – a regional youth group dedicated to improving the services/resources and outcomes for foster youth. Each New England state has 2 youth representatives and adult supporters. This year the group has been working on methods for strategic sharing and the Driving to Success Program advocating for support for foster youth to receive a driver's license.
- DCF Adolescent Outreach works collaboratively with the state Department of Mental Health (DMH) to facilitate access to services for youth and young adults. A new initiative that the Department has been involved with is the Transition Age Youth and Young Adults System of Care Access Initiative (TSAI) Grant. The TSAI grant goal is to increase access for transition age youth & young adults (ages 16-21) to mental health and substance use treatment on their own terms, in service of their own goals. The

priorities of this grant include promoting policies and practices that best support the needs of young adults, developing low barrier referrals and enhancing young adult connections to employment, education & housing and amplifying young adults' voice Statewide; while using culturally relevant approaches to engage youth of color & LGBTQ young adults.

- DCF continues its collaboration with the state Department of Housing and Community Development to manage the Family Unification Program Vouchers (FUP) for housing for transition age youth and the newer program, the Youth Transitioning to Success Program (YTTSP).
- The collaboration between the DCF and the MassHealth has supported Massachusetts' utilization of the federal Chafee Provision allowing states to provide Medicaid coverage for youth who discharge from placement at or after age 18. This benefit is provided up until their 21st birthday without re-application. DCF and MassHealth have been working to facilitate the continuation of Medicaid coverage to eligible young adults so that they do not experience a gap in coverage from "in placement" Mass Health to their adult Medicaid benefit (up to 26). DCF now employs medical social workers to assist with care coordination.
- DCF Adolescent Services staff members have continued to work collaboratively with staff at the Department of Higher Education, the state universities, the 2-year public colleges as well as the staff of the campuses of the University of MA. These collaborations have been very helpful in resolving issues on behalf of our shared students. DCF has continued its presence on campuses and work in partnership with higher education (in the areas of support services, financial aid, registrar, etc.) to enhance the availability of and access to needed resources for our students.
- DCF also works closely with the state Department of Transitional Assistance to assist transition-age youth access SNAP benefits and Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) for parents whose children are not in the custody/care of DCF and may qualify.
- DCF works collaboratively with the state Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) to facilitate access to services for youth and young adults with mental health and/or substance abuse histories. The Department's Caring Together Initiative allows DCF to contract for congregate care and support services jointly with DMH. DCF has also extended this partnership model to contracting for comprehensive foster care with the Department of Youth Services.
- DCF Adolescent Outreach Workers are continuing their communication with local housing and homeless care providers in an effort to identify any young adults who may qualify for DCF and/or Chafee services. Outreach workers reach out to local shelter programs to ask staff to call them if they identify a young adult who identifies as a former foster youth. Our goal is to connect with the young adult to offer Outreach services and other services as appropriate.
- DCF's 29 Education Coordinators are affiliated with each of our geographical area offices to provide assistance, training and support to workers and families for all education and special education related concerns that impact our children and youth. Their focus includes school enrollment, transportation coordination with districts, school engagement and supporting transitions for youth who are hospitalized or returning from congregate care placements. They fulfill a critical role in fostering educational stability and progress for our youth.
- DCF Outreach Program staff members have continued their efforts to strengthen connections with Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funded agencies and career centers with the goal of accessing services and supports for our foster youth. Targeted outreach to foster youth for summer/seasonal job hiring continues.

- DCF's partnership with a large local business, Jordan's Furniture, has grown significantly over the last five years. In an effort to support youth moving into their first apartments, Jordan's Furniture provides gift cards so youth can buy furniture.
- This year's Youth Achievement Celebration honoring youth who graduated from high school, college, a vocational training program or received a GED will be held on May 5th once again at Jordan's Furniture Store in Reading, MA. More than 450 graduates and their guests will celebrate their educational achievements, to share food, activities and a movie. The graduates are also given gifts to commemorate their accomplishments. The event was attended this year by the Governor and First Lady of Massachusetts, the Secretary of Health and Human Services along with the DCF Commissioner and senior leadership. All provided messages of empowerment, support, and pride to the graduates. The DCF Regions will also hold local celebrations for their graduates during the months of May and June at local venues.
- The MA Department of Youth Services (juvenile justice) and DCF have continued the collaboration to identify transitioning youth connected with both agencies that are eligible for Chafee and/or state-funded resources. In April 2019, DCF partnered with DYS and other youth -serving agencies to present a transition age resource workshop at a conference provided by MASOC (Massachusetts Society of a World Free of Sexual Harm by Youth). Chafee funds are made available to eligible youth who have experienced care and placement in both systems.
- More than 200 foster youth, foster/adoptive parents, providers and staff attended this year's statewide College and Career Expo on April 17, 2019. Attendees learn about the opportunities of post-secondary education as well as the state and federal financial support available. Representatives from more than 30 colleges and post-secondary educational programs attended along with a representative from the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority and the Massachusetts Education and Career Opportunities, Inc. Also invited were a select group of private colleges that have committed to providing supportive services to foster care students. In an effort to also engage potential employers of youth, also included in this year's expo were the U.S. Census Bureau, Armstrong Ambulance Company, and Building Pathways to Boston, a program that connects women to professional trades.

Human Trafficking

- DCF Adolescent Outreach staff participates in the DCF leadership group on Commercial Exploitation of Children and Human Trafficking and works through this group on policy changes relative to children missing from care and children classified as CSEC who are also eligible for Chafee funded services. Staff has also assisted with an intranet page on the topic and developing a Transition Age Youth Toolkit for community service providers who work with youth and young adults who have experienced sexual exploitation. In 2019, regular meetings were scheduled and conducted with providers of care to sexually exploited individuals to ensure adequate access is given to victims to both DCF and Chafee programming and services.
- The Department's PAYA Life Skills curriculum addresses the dangers of domestic violence, dating violence, victimization and human trafficking. The focus on self-esteem building, self-care and personal goal setting is also the approach that the Adolescent Outreach staff use with their youth.

Training and Technical Assistance

The staffs of the Adolescent Support Services Unit have continued to provide focused training to new staff and technical assistance to staff, providers and foster parents to strengthen understanding and practice of the policy. These opportunities for training and technical assistance will continue.

The following is a list of newly developed trainings offered jointly by the Massachusetts Child Welfare Training Institute and the DCF Adolescent Services Unit for internal DCF staff and partners:

- *Young Adult Support Payments* - Social Workers gained skills to support youth who receive young adult support payments to budget and maximize their housing resources.
- *Transition Planning for Supervisors with Adolescents in Out of Home Placement* –In these training supervisors learned to support social workers to work with youth to create and document effective transition plans in accordance with the DCF Permanency Planning Policy. The Young Adult Readiness Assessment Tool, PAYA services, and accessing youth development services and funds available to youth and young adults were reviewed.
- *Permanency and the Young Adult* - This training helped social workers and supervisors understand permanency goals including APPLA and Permanency with Kin and how to continue to pursue permanency for older adolescents and young adults in care.
- *PAYA for DCF staff* – In this training, DCF staff gain a deeper understanding of the PAYA curriculum and its role in transition planning. Agency expectations for congregate care and foster care service providers were reviewed and Participants learned how to identify effective life skills training work and engage youth and their caregivers in the work practice.
- *Foster Youth and Post-Secondary Attainment* - This training focused on the basics of the college planning process as well as alternative paths such as vocational training and certification. Information related to academic and social-emotional planning as well as financial aid and financial literacy for post-secondary students are reviewed.

In addition to the newly developed trainings above, the learning opportunities below reflect consistent annual work to equip both internal and external stakeholders with competencies to support transition age youth and young adults.

On a regular basis, Adolescent Services staff provided life skills and youth development trainings statewide. There were seven PAYA certification trainings (teaching participants how to teach youth life skills) across the state this year and three trainings on supporting foster youth in post-secondary education. All DCF staff, contracted agencies, appropriate other state agencies, community partners, and foster parents are invited to attend these trainings.

- The Adolescent Support Services staff also presented 3 trainings for staff, foster parents and providers on post-secondary educational support programs that are available to DCF foster youth and strategies for assisting students to achieve their goals.
- Outreach staff provide resource information and technical assistance to all 29 DCF area offices, many congregate care and independent living programs, foster parent support groups and youth advocacy agencies, including a review of all the available adolescent resources and youth development activities such as the expansion of MassHealth coverage for youth discharging from DCF after age 18 to age 26 through the Affordable Care Act, the Life Skills Support Program, Discharge Support Program, Foster Child Tuition Waivers, the ETV Program, transitional living options and subsidized housing through the FUP-AOP, Peer Leadership trainings, statewide and regional Youth Recognition Dinners, the MA Network of Foster Care Alumni and other support services.

- In the fall of 2018 Outreach staffs provided technical assistance and training at six different regional meetings of contracted foster care agencies who provide Comprehensive Foster Care in order to help build capacity for better transition services and ensure youth in these care settings are connected to Chafee funded services.
- Outreach staffs issue a newsletter for professionals and supporters of college-age foster youth. The publication includes training opportunities and dates; resource and referral information for professionals supporting youth in post-secondary education.
- DCF staff collaborates with Ascentria Care Alliance and provides ongoing training in order for the staff to assist DCF youth who are served by the Office for Refugees and Immigrants with post-secondary education need and life skill development needs.

Consultation with Tribes (section 477(b)(3)(G))

Adolescent Outreach in the Southeast Region continues to provide support and consultation on issues related to transition age youth to the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe. Training and consultation on Chafee funded services including the availability of Adolescent Outreach are made available to Tribe serving professionals and Tribal youth in placement. In 2018, the ICWA Director of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe communicated with DCF that there were no immediate plans to access Chafee funds this year due to no identified eligible youth or young adults. DCF Adolescent Services regularly contacts both tribes, a June 2019 meeting is planned with the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe so new staff is fully informed about the Chafee funded programming at DCF. Updated referral forms and applications are regularly made available to tribal staff that assists the transition age population.

Post-Secondary Education

- For more than a decade, the Department has hosted Statewide and Regional Youth Recognition Dinners to acknowledge the achievements of foster youth who graduated from high school, college, a vocational training program or received a GED/HISET. This year the academic/vocational achievements of 428 youth were recognized. 342 graduating from high school, 23 youth achieving their Hi-set certificate, 14 youth receiving a post-secondary vocational certification, 38 youth graduating with a Bachelor's degree, 8 with an Associate Degree and 3 with a Master's Degree. The Jordan's Furniture Store is a primary sponsor providing the space for the largest recognition event – statewide - with gifts for all the youth and a free movie in the IMAX Theater. Private local donors also help to sponsor the event.
- The Department has issued 224 State College Tuition and Fee Waivers to current or former DCF foster youth this past year with 46 being issued in June 2018. In June 2008, the MA legislature expanded the waiver program to cover fees in addition to tuition. The eligibility for the waiver was also expanded in 2008 so that DCF foster youth who are or were in agency custody and were not able to return home to age 18 are eligible for this benefit at the Massachusetts state two and four-year colleges and all University of Massachusetts campuses. Youth who were adopted or placed in a guardianship home through DCF are also eligible for the same waiver of tuition and fees.
- In the academic year 2018-2019, DCF referred 489 youth to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education for consideration of the Foster Child Grant Program to assist financially with their college/vocational training needs. The Board makes the final determination of eligibility. Awards are based on financial need and student status, including full-time attendance, MA residency, and eligible educational program. The Massachusetts Foster Child Grant is limited to students whose custody status was protective.

- Adolescent Support Services Unit staff presented Educational/Vocational Fairs in 28 of 29 area office for youth, foster parents, congregate care providers, and DCF staff. Outreach staff presented information on financial aid, assisted youth in completing their FAFSA applications and discussed the many options of college/vocational training opportunities available to foster youth. Foster youth who were currently attending college were also present to answer youths' questions. This is a resource that has been provided for more than ten years and will continue.
- Young adults, who leave DCF care after the age of 18 and have not yet reached their 26th birthday, are eligible for the Chafee funded services and the Education and Training Vouchers described below. The vast majority are also eligible for the state-funded Tuition and Fee Waivers. The Adolescent Outreach workers are critical to the work of assisting these young adults to access the needed services including those to address their educational/vocational needs.
- Updated information on post-secondary education funding including scholarships for transition age foster youth is made available to social workers and internal youth partners via the DCF Social Intranet and an electronic shared resource file available to staff via an internal shared drive. Through this technology, updates can be made in real time as scholarship information and other information relative to post-secondary planning and support becomes available.
- The DCF website, www.mass.gov/dcf, provides an online public resource for students and foster parents and partners to access up to date post-secondary and higher education financial benefits and support programs. The information is found under the Adolescent Support Services tab. ETV social workers update and maintain the education information provided via the website.

CFCIP Program Improvement Efforts

The following DCF Strategic Plan Goals are related to the CFCIP Program Improvements outlined in the MA 2014 CFSP and a review of progress made toward each goal:

Foster Care Review (FCR) Policy/strengthen our FCR process with youth > 18 years old.

DCF achieved its goal of strengthening the Foster Care Review process with youth over 18 years old. A new Foster Care Review Policy was implemented in 2019.

While youth and young adults are included in foster care reviews, feedback from the Youth Advisory Board was frequently that they were held at inconvenient times. Technological changes have been made in the reporting of availability of clients to address better attendance at reviews. In addition, youth are invited to bring a support person to their reviews to be part of the review team. The Foster Care Review Director has begun collaboration with the Joint Youth Advisory Committee to receive ongoing feedback and the impact of new practices associated with the new policy.

Permanency Hearings for youth > 18 years old

DCF achieved its goal to support Permanency hearings for youth over age 18. Social Workers prepare permanency reports and submit them to the court until voluntary placement ends with the Department.

DCF achieved its goal of offering youth panels in area offices. Per the DCF Permanency Planning Policy, panels are convened when there is disagreement between a young adult and an area office about the continuation of services. Some offices have expanded panels to serve all youth age 18 and over to evaluate effective case practice and service needs.

Support the MA Network of Foster Care Alumni to become self-sustaining

DCF did not achieve its goal of the MA Network of Foster Care Alumni (MassNFCA) to become self-sustaining. The MassNFCA has achieved 501 (c)-(3) status and has engaged in fundraising and advocacy efforts, it still remains in need of the state funds that exist for staffing costs.

Develop placement supports for youth > 18 years and older

DCF has achieved its goal of developing placement supports for youth over age 18. Supported housing programs have been strengthened with a significant increase in leased young adults in the Family Unification Program (28) and the Youth Transition to Success Program (22). The City of Boston has received \$4.9 million through HUD for its Plan to End Youth Homelessness. DCF staff sits on the Executive Committee of this initiative. In 2017, DCF collaborated with the Boston youth homelessness provider, Bridge Over Troubled Waters for its Family and Youth Service Bureau demonstration project called Apartment Living Pathways (ALPS). Through this program, young adults from care and LGBTQ youth were served confidentially for up to 18 months in supported housing in Boston. In addition, the DCF Youth Advisory Board members partnered with the Department of Mental Health funded Impact Youth Access Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. Young adults from system care are able to access assistance with housing, employment, and benefits navigation.

MAPP training curriculum for foster and adoptive parents includes a richer presentation of adolescent development, trauma, and transition age youth policy and practice guidelines. Pre-service training has incorporated curriculum on brain science so that social workers can better support effective caregiving and parenting of youth and young adults.

Develop additional educational supports

DCF has achieved its goal of developing additional educational supports by collaborating with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, and the public colleges and universities. At the secondary level, guidance counselors are trained in how to serve transition age foster youth in person bi-annually at a statewide conference. In addition, the Massachusetts Education Financing Authority hosts a webinar series annually where DCF staff provides web-based training on post-secondary planning with foster youth. The public colleges and universities in Massachusetts have designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) staff for foster youth on their campuses. All SPOCS have access to the ETV funded staff for assistance with the Department when needed.

Continue to strengthen the NYTD program.

DCF has achieved its goal to meet all NYTD targets and utilize available data when making policy and practice decisions. Technological improvements have resulted in increased survey participation. The in placement Cohort of 19-year-olds in FFY19 had 100% participation.

Changes as a result of the amendments made to the Chafee and ETV Programs as a result of the passage of P.L. 115-123, the Family First Prevention Services Act.

In FY19, DCF conducted analysis on the utilization of Chafee funds in order to determine the impact of exercising the option to extend these programs to older youth. Upon the completion of this review, the agency has decided to move forward with necessary steps to extend Chafee eligibility to age 23.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM

Accomplishments

In the 2018-2019 academic year, Massachusetts awarded 521 Education and Training Vouchers. There were 249 new vouchers and 272 ongoing vouchers this year and 52% of the vouchers awarded this year were for returning students. The students who received an ETV award this year attended 99 different colleges, universities and vocational training programs in 11 different states. Of the 521 recipients, 87% of the students were enrolled full-time, and 13% were enrolled part-time.

Below is a list of activities conducted by dedicated ETV staff:

- In an effort to serve more students and to respond to feedback provided by ETV recipients, Education and Training Specialists held individual meetings with students and their social workers. In addition to these private consultations, 12 college advising events were held on 9 campuses this past academic year. More than 200 foster youth were served through these events via attending an advising day, meeting privately with ETV Social Workers or through advocacy on their behalf to college financial aid or student support personnel. Students were assisted with financial planning, housing, academic progress and social/emotional needs. Group advising also provided an opportunity for interested students to meet peer mentors from foster care who attend the same academic institutions.
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has developed a Single Point of Contact Network (SPOC) on college campuses. These individuals are staff volunteers from varying departments on college campuses that will work with students at risk of not completing school due to challenges that are not academic in nature. Together DCF staff and the campus SPOCs assist foster youth with needed support and resources. DCF staff trained SPOCs and guidance counselors from across the state on supports services and programs offered through DCF to guide post-secondary students on sustaining their education and establishing lifelong connections in their community.
- Education and Training Specialists worked with MA Educational Finance Authority (MEFA) and offered training through a webinar to MA guidance counselors on post-secondary education. This training included financial planning, choosing the right school, academic guidance, sustaining their education, campus resources, and establishing permanency through the campus community. Counselors were provided with contacts at the Department of Children and Families and given information on how to access the DCF educational support programs.
- Education and Training specialists collaborated with the Wellness Center and clinicians at Bridgewater State University to promote well-being for foster youth on campus. Together the team discussed strategies on increasing access to mental health services, medical needs, as well as life skills and creating campus connections. DCF Education and Training Specialist and staff members from the Wellness center will continue to work together to promote positive youth development and self-awareness for youth on campus creating opportunities to participate in different housing, employment, clubs and organizations on campus through advising.
- DCF continues to publish a newsletter for ETV student recipients to invite input from college students and educates readers on resources and events geared toward post-secondary success. Guidance from the Youth Advisory Board members and DCF college students will continue to be solicited to ensure the information is relevant to the needs of the students and presented in a manner that will engage students.

The ETV Program funding is particularly helpful to the DCF foster youth who were not in protective custody (as they are not presently eligible for the state-funded Foster Child Grant) and to those youth who were adopted from foster care or youth who were placed in a guardianship with kin after attaining age 16. The ETV Program has provided significant post-secondary assistance to eligible foster and adopted youth and has assisted them with making more manageable and safer transitions to adult living.

See chart below:

2018-2019 ETV Program Information	
Total Recipients for 2018-2019	521
Breakdown of Total Recipients for 2018-2019	
Show New Recipients and Ongoing Recipients	
2019(NEW)	249
2018, 2019	107
2017, 2018, 2019	65
2016, 2017, 2018, 2019	49
2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019	20
2017, 2019	10
Other combinations of academic years	21
Total	521
Number of Universities/Colleges/Vocational attended	
by 521 ETV Recipients	99
Number of States	11
Enrollment Status of 510 ETV Recipients	
Full-Time	454
Part-Time	67
4 Year Public	209
2 Year Public	200
4 Year Private	85
2 Year Private	3
Vocational Training	24

The goals for the ETV program noted in prior years are listed below:

- Providing all eligible students with support via the ETV Program and other means of assistance and providing academic and personal support to foster youth pursuing post-secondary education;

Status: Achieved. Not all eligible youth access ETV for a variety of reasons. Some do not want to continue receiving support from the child welfare agency. Some have their financial aid needs met through other resources. Through its training and marketing efforts and it's relationships with

secondary and post-secondary institutions. DCF is confident that it is reaching a satisfactory amount of eligible students.

- Maximizing all state and federal academic and financial resources available to students involved with DCF;

Status: Achieved. All state and federal resources have been exhausted on a regular basis each fiscal year.

- Incorporating initiatives to connect youth with appropriate supports at academic institutions including staff and any available mentoring programs on campus or through DCF;

Status: Achieved. Through forming relationships with post-secondary institutions and understanding the school's capacity to serve the various needs of youth, staffs are able to connect youth with the right departments and professionals on campus to assist with their needs.

- Educating the DCF workforce and its partners that serve adolescents on the importance of adequate college planning and preparation as well as the need for intensive support while youth are attending post-secondary educational programs.

Status: Achieved. The DCF workforce and its partners are provided with multiple training, professional development and event-based learning opportunities about transition services including post-secondary planning and support work.

- Increasing education and capacity of college staff who work in student support services to help them understand the needs of foster youth who are pursuing post-secondary education.

Status: Achieved. Through the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) model, DCF is able to regularly meet with and update college staff about individual students as well as new or evolving support models.

- Increase and sustain consumers of the ETV Program to join the DCF Joint Youth Advisory Committee.

Status: Achieved. A little more than 40% of the Youth Advisory Board Members that participate in the DCF Joint Youth Advisory Committee have received ETV.

- Continuing focus groups of ETV recipients to obtain feedback on program services and recommendations for improvements.

Status: Achieved. A focus group of ETV recipients is planned for June 2019 to discuss needs for the upcoming academic year 2019- 2020.

Collaboration

- DCF has and will continue its membership on the Massachusetts Department of Education's Financial Aid Advisory Board to ensure that foster care youth are represented when financial aid policy and practice is developed at Massachusetts colleges.
- DCF staff will continue to meet with financial aid staff of Massachusetts public colleges for the purposes of programmatic planning as well as a review of current financial aid packaging for enrolled foster youth

- DCF staff continued to provide support to the University of Massachusetts Boston UAccess Program. This office is designed to provide support and referral for students who are facing social, emotional, and financial challenges at the university. DCF staff work to facilitate services offered by the UAccess Program to foster care students enrolled at UMASS.
- DCF staff continues to serve as advisory board members on the Statewide Network on Homeless College Students and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Financial Aid Advisory Board. On these Boards, DCF staff ensures that current state programming and resources are inclusive of the needs of foster youth.
- DCF staff have developed and maintained partnerships with state community colleges to identify housing and educational support resources and have presented at numerous informational meetings for field staff college staff to share information on these resources.

Massachusetts State Financial Aid Programs for Foster Youth

DCF coordinates the ETV Program with other Massachusetts state-funded education and training programs currently offering financial assistance to eligible foster and adopted youth including the State College Tuition and Fee Waiver Program, the Foster Child Grant Program and the William Warren Scholarship Program.

The ETV staff work with the MA Board of Higher Education – Office of Student Financial Assistance around the Foster Child Grant. ETV staff review all ETV applications, Foster Child Grant Applications, William Warren Scholarship applications and financial aid award statements in an effort to prevent duplication of benefits and determine that the amount of assistance from any Federal sources combined with ETV funds does not exceed the “cost of attendance” as outlined in 477 (b) (3) (J).

Foster Child Tuition and Fee Waiver Program

The Foster Child Tuition and Fee Waiver Program provide waivers for undergraduate tuition and fees for state-supported classes at the in-state rate to foster children at any one of Massachusetts' 29 state universities and community colleges. Initially approved by the Board of Higher Education in June of 2000 for tuition waivers, this program was expanded to include fees in July of 2008. Youth eligible for the state college undergraduate or certificate tuition and fee waivers include:

- A current or former foster child who was placed in the custody of the DCF and remained in custody through age 18 without subsequently being returned home. The youth must have been in custody for at least six months immediately prior to age 18;
- Youth adopted through DCF; and
- Youth who have been in the custody of the DCF and whose guardianship was sponsored by DCFs through age 18.

Massachusetts Foster Child Grant Program

The Foster Child Grant Program was developed in January 2001 and provides up to \$6000 of financial aid for current and former DCF youth (in custody via a C&P) who have left care at age 18 or older without returning home. This aid may be used at any IV- E eligible public or private college. The MA Board of Higher Education manages these grants, determining the level of funding per student.

William Warren Scholarship Program

The Department issued five William Warren Scholarships this year to youth served by the agency who were attending four-year colleges and who demonstrated need beyond financial support programs available at the state and federal level. These scholarships were financed with donated funds and nominally by the State Ward account. Many of the youth who apply for the program are also eligible for the Massachusetts Tuition and Fee Waiver and other higher education support programs such as ETV. Applicants who qualify for other forms of student aid are supported by DCF workers to access such aid.

Hope Worldwide Dr. Martin Luther King Essay Contest

DCF has continued its partnership with Hope Worldwide, an agency that sponsors an essay contest annually to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King. College students from foster care are invited to compete in an essay contest where they reflect on their public service. More than \$3500 in scholarships was awarded to foster youth enrolled in college. The winners were honored at a service dedicated to Dr. King.

RESPONSIBLE STATE AGENCY FOR ADMINISTERING CHAFEE PROGRAM

The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency responsible for administering the Title IV-E program; DCF will also administer the Independent Living Program under section 477 (section 477 (b) (2)). DCF will cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs implemented to achieve its purposes.

Name of State: Massachusetts

	Total ETVs Awarded	Number of New ETVs
<u>Final Number:</u> 2017-2018 School Year (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018)	481	226
2018-2019 School Year* (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019)	521	249

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN ADOPTED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Supports Provided to All Adoptive and Guardianship Families

The Department of Children and Families contracts with Child & Family Services, Inc. to provide post-adoption services through the Adoption Journeys Program open to all families in the Commonwealth, including families of children adopted from other countries. The Adoption Journeys contract has been in place since 1997. The Department believes that having a private agency provide post-adoption services is less threatening to families than requiring them to work directly with the state's child protection agency.

Adoption Journeys provides information and referral services to adoptive families. An "800" number is answered live 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. There is also a component of the contract designed to educate

therapists, attorneys, judges, and others who may work with adoptive families. Adoption Journeys has also conducted statewide professional conferences as well as smaller regional trainings.

Other program components include:

- *Regional Response Team:* The response teams are made up of adoption competent staff including a social worker, parent liaison, and team leader. These brief supportive services offer families joint problem solving, coordination of services, and home-based counseling.
- *Parent and Youth Support Groups:* Support groups are led or co-led by adoptive parents, adopted youth, social workers or clinicians. Most meet once a month and some are co-sponsored with other organizations. All support groups are open to new members and additional support and psycho-educational groups are formed as needs are identified.
- *Parent and Young Adult Liaisons:* Individuals and families requesting a liaison are matched as closely as possible according to the needs, interests, and expectations of all involved. Geography, life experiences, diversity, and the family's style of relating are some of the areas considered in making a match. Ongoing support and training are offered to families participating in this program.
- *Adoption Competency Training:* Training opportunities are available for professionals interested in enhancing their work with adopted children and their families.
- *Respite Care:* Respite care is available on a time-limited and planned basis for hourly, daily, or overnight care. These brief supports can help to alleviate stress, strengthen family relationships, or respond to an unanticipated family event. Limited respite services are available to families in or out of their home. These services are matched as closely as possible to the needs and ages of the child(ren), geographic area, family characteristics, and dynamics. Ongoing support is offered to families participating in respite. Group respite activities, as well as family social activities are also available statewide throughout this component.

Any family who resides in Massachusetts that has legalized an adoption or permanent guardianship can access the post-adoption services. Approximately 32% of the families working with Adoption Journeys in 2017 and 2018 were infant, private, or intercountry adoptions.

Final update to Post-Adoption Services in FY2019

As is the case in most states, the number of new intercountry adoptions by families in Massachusetts continues to decline. According to State Department data, there were only 49 intercountry adoptions in Massachusetts in 2017, down from 55 in 2016, 98 in 2015, and 112 in 2014. Therefore, there has not been an increased demand for post-adoption support services for new intercountry adoptive families. The primary demand is from families with teenagers who were adopted from other countries anywhere from 1 to 10 or more years ago. MA DCF does not anticipate changing its post-adoption support model, as Adoption Journeys continues to be successful for families in this demographic.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE

DCF's Permanency Planning Policy (*revised July 2013*) identifies the Department's permanency goals as: Permanency through Stabilizing the Intact Family, Permanency through Reunification, Permanency through Adoption, Permanency through Guardianship, Permanency through Care with Kin, and Permanency through APPLA.

The policy provides guidance in support of each goal, as appropriate, and supports activities and services that reduce the length of time that young children under age five are in foster care without a permanent family, as well as those being served in-home or in a community-based setting.

For families involved with the Department, the initial goal is to stabilize the intact family. This goal is supported by the DCF social worker and services obtained through community resources. Resources include the Department's Family Networks contracts, which provide Support and Stabilization services to the family which are broad and target to needs identified through the Family Assessment, and services obtained through other state agencies (mental health, substance abuse, etc.). For children birth to age five, nearly half return home prior to 6 months in placement.

*Table 1: Unique count of children under the age of five by Home Removal Event (HRE) end reason from April 2018 - February 2019. **

Type of Placement	Number of Children (Under Age 5)	Percentage of Children (Under Age 5)
	2019	2019
Child Returned Home	293	33.1%
Child Adopted	438	49.5%
Guardianship	123	13.9%
Custody to Other Individual	31	3.5%
Grand Total	885	100.0%

The Department encourages and assists parents to support reunification and reduce the length of time their child is in care by utilizing the parents' own strengths and resources as well as community resources, such as:

Family and Community Resources:

- Kin (including the non-resident parent, as appropriate), friends, neighbors and others acquainted with the child and/or family
- Childcare
- Substance abuse counseling and treatment resources
- Domestic violence services, including services for victims and offenders
- Mental health services
- Healthcare resources
- Vocational, job training, and employment services
- Financial assistance
- Housing assistance services
- Developmental disability services
- School-based services and early intervention programs
- Camping and other community-based recreational/educational resources
- Support and self-help groups
- Organizations serving ethnic and linguistic minority populations
- Religious organizations
- Civic and other community groups

Department-Related Services:

- Information and referrals to other state and community agencies
- Case management
- Domestic violence services
- Support and stabilization services
- Services to support racial, cultural and linguistic minority families
- Placements for children and adolescents
- Services for pregnant and parenting adolescents
- Sexual abuse prevention/treatment services.
- Access to medical Social Workers in each area office

Whenever possible and appropriate, the child is placed together with full, half and/or step-siblings already in or also requiring placement. Children are placed as close to home as possible to support frequent visits, maintain the continuity of school and child care, and provide for culturally-appropriate community involvement.

Child Care Vouchers:

As of March 2019, approximately 10,275 children were receiving subsidized childcare as part of their involvement with DCF. 7260 of these children receive their childcare through contracted slot at specific childcare providers; an additional 3015 children receive their care through vouchers which their caregivers can use at any participating childcare provider in the Commonwealth. Of the 10,275 children in child care, about 6900 are infant, toddlers and preschoolers. Access to vouchers for DCF children has allowed more children to be able to be served in areas where there were barriers due to geography and age gaps in programming. DCF is continuing to work with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to increase access to early education for our children from birth to 5.

Placement Process:

Placement decisions are based on the child's best interests, including those related to safety, well-being, permanence, and continuity of significant relationships, and reflect efforts made to identify the least restrictive setting available to meet the child's individual needs.

Six Week Placement Review:

A Six Week Placement Review occurs when a child enters placement from home or hospital or returns to placement after a significant stay at home for six months or longer. The Area Director/designee identifies a child-specific team, which includes the parents, foster/pre-adoptive parents or other placement provider and social work staff familiar with the child and family. The Team's role is to support the child's placement while addressing her/his needs for safety, well-being and permanency. The Team gathers and reviews information about the child and family from the parents; kin; educational, medical and mental health providers; foster/pre-adoptive parents or other placement providers; and others familiar with the child and family's history, strengths and needs.

The child-specific information gathered during the first six weeks of placement encompasses the child's medical, educational, emotional, psychological and social history and current functioning. This information augments the comprehensive family assessment which is being completed simultaneously or, if completed previously, is being expanded to incorporate the additional information required by the child's placement.

The information is used to support appropriate service planning and service provision to the family and the child who is in placement, while at the same time establishing the foundation for achieving permanency for the child.

If placement beyond six weeks is needed and the child's initial placement has not been with kin or someone from among the family's network of significant relationships, or if siblings have not been placed together, efforts are made with the parents during the first six weeks to identify someone known to the child and family with whom an approved placement can be made. Documentation of contacts with kin is required.

The Review Meeting is an opportunity for the parents, family and foster/pre-adoptive parents or other placement providers to participate in open discussion. At this meeting, the family's and the child's strengths and needs, in particular, the child's needs for health, safety, well-being, permanence and continuity of significant relationships, are reviewed. A tentative, reasoned assessment of the probability of the child returning home and the family's capacity to benefit from reunification services is made. The frequency and quality of parent-child contacts and visits during the first six weeks of placement and the parents' participation in services and completion of tasks identified in the Service Plan also are reviewed.

Together, the parents and Department revise the Action Plan as indicated:

1. Designation of Foster Care 6 Week Placement Review Team

2. Team Tasks:

- Review of Placement Options
- Contacts and Visitation
- Legal Notifications
- Obtaining Needed Resources and Documents and Supporting Placement Provider

3. Schedule 6 Week Placement Review Meeting

Permanency Planning Conference (PPC):

Review of the Permanency goal for children in placement continues through Foster Care Reviews conducted for each six-month cycle during which children remain in care; Permanency Planning Conferences are conducted according to policy:

Circumstances Requiring a PPC:

- As soon as it is determined that the prognosis for reunification is poor;
- Within the first 9 months following the date of placement;
- If the outcome of a 9 month PPC was a decision not to initiate TPR and the child has remained in placement for 15 of the previous 22 months;
- To change a child's permanency plan;
- Within 20 working days after a Foster Care Review determination that includes the recommendation that the child's identified permanency plan needs to be changed; or
- Within 5 working days after a court determines that reasonable efforts to reunify are not required.

Foster Care Review Policy

The Foster Care Review Policy has been updated and updates went into effect on March 11, 2019. The Foster Care Reviews are scheduled by the sixth calendar month after at least one child in a family under the age of 22 is placed in care and held no less frequently than once every six months.

Goals of the new policy are to increase the participation in reviews and to ensure that all updated information is available at the time of the review. This will help to ensure that every child is receiving necessary services and permanency planning.

Determinations are made by the panel in the review:

- Whether any concerns for the child, youth or young adults' safety were identified through the review process
- Whether the child, youth or young adult's placement is necessary as of the review date placement
- Whether the child, youth or young adult's current placement is appropriate
- Whether the placement resource fulfilled placement expectation to meet the child, youth or young adult needs.
- Whether the Department has taken steps to ensure the child, youth or young adult's placement resource followed the reasonable and prudent parent standard.
- Whether the Department has taken steps to ascertain whether the placement resource provider offered the child, youth or young adult regular ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities, working to help develop this child, youth or young adult's special talent/interest/gift
- Whether the Department adequately addressed the needs of the family
- The participation of each individual as follows for the period of the review
 - Did the parent/guardian, youth and or young adult participate in the Action Plan
 - Did the parent/ caregiver demonstrate behavioral changes to reduce or alleviate danger or need for placement or to achieve desired outcomes?
 - Did the youth or young adult demonstrate observable changes to achieve desired outcomes for his/her safety, permanency and well-being
- The extent of progress made toward achievement of the child, youth or young adult's permanent plan
- The child, youth or young adult's most appropriate Permanency Plan determine by the FCR panel
- The projected date for achieving the child, youth or young adult's Permanency Plan

Improvement:

Between 2016 and 2018 there was a modest improvement in reducing the average number of days in placement for children under the age of 5 who either returned home or reached permanency through Guardianship. (See Table 2). Efforts will continue to improve these numbers moving forward.

Table 2: Average number of days in placement for those children under age 5 exiting by HRE end reason.

	Average of Number of Days in Placement 2016	Average of Number of Days in Placement 2017	Average of Number of Days in Placement 2018	Average of Number of Days in Placement 2019 *	Change in Average Number of Days Since 2016 *
Child Returned Home	61.0	58.0	55.4	76.2	15.2
Guardianship	615.6	611.3	610.4	662.1	46.5

C4. PROGRAM SUPPORT

Summarize the state's training and technical assistance provided to counties and other local or regional entities that operate state programs and its impact on the achievement of 2015-2019 CFSP goals and objectives.

- 1. The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Welfare Institute (CWI) – 1/2015 – Present:** The CWI provides a variety of training, professional development and technical assistance at every level of DCF. CWI provides the following training opportunities for newly on boarded staff or those new to their positions:
 - New Social Worker Preservice Training (NSWPT) for all new DCF social workers. NSWPT provides foundational policy and practice content required before a social work can be assigned a case.
 - New Supervisor Training (NST) for all new DCF social worker supervisors. NST content gives a new supervisor the necessary administrative, educational, supportive, and clinical practice skills to manage social workers.
 - New Area Program Manager Training (NAPMT) is a series that supports APMs as they assume their roles managing social worker supervisors. The content in this series walks through administrative, educational, supportive, and clinical expectations at a middle management level with broader oversight and decision-making responsibilities.
- 2. Master in Social Work (MSW) Fellowship and Professional Certificate Programs – 1/2015 – Present:** CWI offers professional education opportunities for qualified staff with a MSW Fellowship and a professional certificate program.
 - MSW Fellowship is offered to staff through several university and college partnerships around the state. The Fellowship accepts a limited number of qualified staff from every DCF region.
 - The professional certificate programs are offered to staff through several university and college partnerships. Applications are accepted from every DCF region for a limited number of seats at two levels; one program, the Trauma-Informed Certificate in Child Welfare Practice is open to all social work staff that apply and are qualified. In addition, DCF initiated a higher level Trauma-Informed Certificate for Supervisors and Managers.
- 3. In-service and Professional Development Courses – 1/2015 – Present:** The CWI offers practice topic based professional development courses throughout the year for social workers, social worker supervisors, and area program managers. The development of these courses has evolved to be more practice based as well as being more responsive to field identified needs. Information about the courses is provided on a quarterly basis to all DCF staff through a comprehensive training and professional development newsletter.
- 4. Policy Development and Implementation –1/2015—present:** The CWI staff is part of the policy development and implementation efforts of DCF. CWI staff provides technical assistance to the policy unit regarding policy rollout training and curriculum content. More direct assistance is provided around development of training materials

Describe the technical assistance and capacity building efforts that the state received in FY 2015-2019 in support of the CFSP/APSR goals and objectives. Describe how capacity building services from partnering organizations or consultants assisted in achieving the identified goals and objectives.

- **Capacity Building Center for States (CBCS) – 02/2018 – Present:** The CBCS partnered with the DCF-CWI to develop and pilot a leadership framework for DCF’s leaders.

Together, CWI and the CBCS is developing and piloting competencies for leadership professional development, integrating DCF policy into training, and ensuring that critical thinking skills and coaching principles are embedded in training provided to newly hired social work supervisors and managers.

The overarching goal of the capacity building partnership with the CBCS is to ensure that DCF experiences a positive shift in its workforce, leadership, and management (knowledge and skills) as well as leadership commitment, buy-in, and values of competency based learning opportunities. Further, DCF participated in the review of existing capacity, and the research, selection, and integration of best practice in training curriculum. In addition, DCF participated in the piloting and evaluation of a Peer-to-Peer Learning Community model.

- **University of Maine, Muskie Cutler Institute (MCI) – 7/2017 – Present:** The MCI provided curriculum development services as directed by DCF staff in accordance with the specific needs of the agency. To establish a development framework, MCI reviewed existing New Social Worker Preservice Training (NSWPT) instructional materials and content that included focus groups with DCF subject matter experts, field staff, CWI staff, and the DCF Executive Team regarding NSWPT.

The overall goal of the capacity building partnership with MCI is to develop a comprehensive NSWPT curriculum based on existing best practices and competencies. The curriculum incorporates a blended delivery format. It includes a comprehensive Trainer Guide, a Trainee (Participant) Manual, and development materials for supervisors to support on-the-job or transfer of learning

- **New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors (The Association)—1/2015 – Present:** The Association supports DCF efforts to develop and implement policies that promote competent child welfare practices. Through regional meetings and quarterly conference calls with training directors, the Association fosters informational discussions critical to DCF identified goals and objectives. These technical discussions have included workforce recruitment and retention, staff training and development, team building, and service delivery methods.

The Association informs DCF’s capacity for change and improvement by helping to enhance skills such as the transfer of learning and change management.

- **Massachusetts Child Trauma Project (MCT) – 1/2015 – 9/2016:** The MCT project provided unique opportunities to enhance trauma-informed practices by training DCF staff utilizing the Child Welfare Toolkit developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN). Family resource and kinship providers were trained in Trauma Informed Parenting utilizing the NCTSN Resource Parent Curriculum. Additionally, Trauma Informed Leadership Teams (TILT) were established in each of

DCF's 29 Area Offices as well as the Central Office. The TILTs were designed to identify innovations to enhance trauma informed child welfare practices and the well-being of staff.

Summarize how the state's activities undertaken in FYs 2015-2019 in child and family services-related research, evaluation, management information systems, and/or quality assurances systems informed service delivery and contributed to achieving the goals and objectives of the 2015-2019 CFSP.

- **Trauma-Informed Casework Practices and Trauma-Specific Evidence-Based Treatments:** DCF was selected to receive a grant from the Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, to build capacity to provide trauma-informed casework practices and trauma-specific evidence-based treatments (EBT).

DCF partnered with LUK, Inc., Justice Resource Institute Trauma Center, Boston Medical Center's Child Witness to Violence Program and UMass Medical Center to provide basic and advanced training for DCF staff, as well as to provide training to selected mental health providers.

The Director of Evaluation for this grant chairs an Evaluation Committee and reports to the grant steering committee. This committee consists of consumers as well as stakeholders from DCF and provider agencies who assist with the evaluation planning, interpretation of results and recommendations for project improvement. The evaluation design includes a randomized control trial of the Breakthrough Series Model for implementing practice change and a quasi-experimental study of the effectiveness with or without the availability of evidence-based trauma treatments.

- **Alleviating Child Trafficking:** The Department successfully competed for federal funds to support the development of statewide partnerships aimed at alleviating child trafficking. The grant proposed an action research model for evaluating project success. Dr. Amy Farrell, Associate Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Northeastern University, leads the evaluation and works with the grant leadership team and advisory board to determine progress on meeting program objectives. Dr. Farrell accesses administrative data to quantitatively assess the impact of grant activities. She collects qualitative data through observations and interviews to assess the successes and challenges of the program model. An annual evaluation report is prepared for the project's advisory board.
- **Title IV-E Waiver Project:** DCF was one of 26 agencies nationwide that have received Title IV-E waiver project approval from the Children's Bureau in 2012. Under the waiver, child welfare agencies were allowed to use Title IV-E funds more flexibly than traditionally permitted to offer innovative services to build on family-driven, child and youth-focused care and community involvement. The waiver opened a window of opportunity for comprehensive child welfare finance and program reform based on outcomes of these waiver projects across the nation. The Commonwealth implemented Caring Together as its five-year waiver demonstration project on January 1, 2014. DCF has submitted periodic progress reports to ACF throughout the life of the waiver. DMA Health Strategies, an independent evaluator contracted by DCF, is completing a comprehensive evaluation of the demonstration project. DMA has conducted focus groups and surveys with DCF staff, providers, and families to evaluate the implementation process for Caring Together.

The evaluation aims to assess:

- outcomes achieved in youth and family safety, permanency, and well-being;
- quality of services and satisfaction among youth and families;

- fidelity to Caring Together principles; and
 - service utilization and fiscal impact.
- **CQI Case Review:** In its CQI strategic planning, the Department assessed the benefits of building internal capacity for conducting case reviews in lieu of, or in combination with, contracted case reviewers. Recognizing the significant value of internal capacity, the Department established a CQI Unit within the agency. The CQI Unit consists of a unit Director and one CQI Specialist (social worker supervisor level position) in each of the five DCF regions. The Department has adopted the Federal CFSR Round 3 Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) and is using it to review randomly selected cases.
 - **Structured Decision Making – Risk Assessment:** Embedding assessment of safety and risk into daily practice is a core MA CFSR PIP strategy. The Department worked with the National Council on Crime & Delinquency, Children’s Research Center (NCCD/CRC) to develop and validate a new Risk Assessment Tool. Working with the DCF Child Welfare Institute and the Policy and Practice Unit, NCCD/CRC is completing development of a train-the-trainer curriculum and set of E-Learning modules to support the i-FamilyNet rollout of the revised risk assessment tool in September 2019.

C5. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN STATES AND TRIBES

This report is submitted as part of the plan of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for compliance with title IV-B of the Social Securities Act (the Act) and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978. The report includes the Annual Progress and Services Report for FFY 2019.

Overview of ICWA for FFY19

DCF continues to work diligently to protect the rights of its indigenous families through its practice and expansion of its ICWA program. DCF documents the race/ethnicity of all consumers and encourages social work teams to inquire about a family's Native American/Alaskan Native (NA/AN) ancestry throughout the life of a child protective case. When custody is assigned to DCF of a child with NA/AN heritage, the social worker is required to notify the MA ICWA Coordinator. DCF encourages staff to engage families who maintain custody of their children to inquire with identified tribes as to their eligibility for membership and if there are applicable services they could utilize.

DCF social workers, supervisors, managers, and attorneys seek and gain assistance around implementing the best practices of ICWA from the ICWA Coordinator, Regional ICWA Liaisons, and DCF's ICWA Intranet webpage. Whenever ICWA staff engages with other Department staff they highlight the need to follow all ICWA protocols and educate staff about the Massachusetts Tribes. Ongoing statewide trainings occur at DCF Area Offices and statewide. Training material and DCF's ICWA Intranet webpage are updated to provide the most current information.

DCF has further demonstrated its commitment to ICWA by maintaining its multi-disciplinary ICWA team.

- A full-time DCF ICWA Coordinator was hired in January 2018 and provides DCF with the ability to address the increased number of ICWA inquiries and resulting administrative demands.
- The ICWA Clinical Consultant
- A Deputy General Counsel who oversees ICWA.
- Five Regional ICWA Liaisons who assist area office staff in all aspects of ICWA compliance.

Through the sponsorship of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's Court Improvement Project, the Deputy General Counsel, the ICWA Coordinator and the Northern Regional ICWA liaison have attended the annual National Indian Child Welfare Association Conference.

Coordination with Tribes

Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) – WTGH(A) and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (MWT) (Past, Present and Future)

Throughout the FFY'15-FFY'19 period, MA DCF has had ongoing and meaningful contact and collaboration with Massachusetts' two federally recognized Tribes. The Tribal contact for the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (WTGH (A)) is Catherine Edwards, Human Service Director. Previously, the Tribal contact was Bonnie Chalifoux, Human Service Director who retired in August 2018. Catherine Hendricks is the ICWA Director and contact for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (MWT). The most recent face-to-face meeting with both Tribes was hosted by the WTGH on Martha's Vineyard in September 2018.

Nine formal meetings have taken place with DCF and the Tribes between the FFY'15 and FFY'19 period. DCF scheduled, managed the agenda and facilitated three of these meetings. These meetings updated Tribal staff of the ICWA work underway at DCF along with new developments related to ways in which DCF would continue to ensure compliance. On September 20, 2018, DCF met with both MA Wampanoag Tribes. The Tribes and DCF agreed that continued collaboration and communication are vital toward continued

success. The meeting allowed for DCF and the Tribes to share updates on implementation of ICWA, the outcome of collaborative efforts and future initiatives. The ICWA Coordinator met with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe ICWA Team on December 10, 2018, to share updates and ideas since the last meeting. On April 24, 2019, the DCF ICWA Coordinator, Southern Regional DCF ICWA Liaison, and several staff members from the Cape and Islands MA DCF Area Office met with Catherine Edwards, Human Services Director for the WTGH (A) and Lee Ann Wander, Chief of Staff for the WTGH (A). A discussion took place on a variety of topics including foster home recruitment, new structuring of the WTGH (A)'s ICWA Department, a practice that supports Wampanoag families in the state, and preliminary discussion on the review of the previous Intergovernmental Agreement.

In addition to formal meetings scheduled with the Tribes, further opportunities for collaboration, idea-sharing and communication occur via phone and email on a regular basis. Both Tribes and DCF supports open and regular communication via all mediums.

Beginning April 11, 2018, a planning committee comprised of the DCF ICWA team, the Mashpee Wampanoag ICWA team, and the Capacity Building Collaborative for Tribes began collaboration on a statewide ICWA training that took place on November 5th, 2018. The full-day training, led by Margaret Burt, was comprehensive, addressing all technical aspects of ICWA. The attendees included state and tribal caseworkers, juvenile and probate judges, DCF staff attorneys, tribal judges, court staff, and tribal elders. The day concluded with two ICWA panels. The first ICWA panel, which addressed legal aspects of ICWA, included tribal judges, tribal attorneys, and DCF's Assistant General Counsel. The second panel, which focused on the clinical aspects of ICWA, included members of the Mashpee Wampanoag ICWA team and the ICWA Coordinator for DCF.

DCF spearheaded work with the Tribes and successfully updated an active efforts tool that will promote understanding and uniformity in protective social work with NA/AN families. DCF has provided the Tribes with updates on scheduled trainings for DCF staff, and has welcomed the Tribes to co-lead trainings. Both the Tribes and DCF have expressed that collaboration on training is a mutual future interest.

DCF has preliminarily proposed the formation of a Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) Committee, which will be made up of tribal, state and legal representatives. The purpose of the Committee will be to clarify and create standards for QEWs in the areas of qualifications, recruitment, selection, preparation, training funding, sustainability, and Committee oversight. This project would begin by drawing on national QEW standards and practice already in place. ICWA representatives from both MA Wampanoag Tribes responded optimistically to the proposal and informed DCF that final approval to participate in this work comes from their Tribal Council. DCF is currently in the process of sending formal proposals to the Chairpersons of each Tribe.

Status of Intergovernmental Agreements

The negotiations for the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) began in April 2017 between MA DCF and the MWT. Currently, DCF and the Tribe are in agreement regarding focuses such as services (current, post-placement and pre-placement), child placement, notice, training, inter-agency coordination, amendments and terminations to agreements, confidentiality, ICWA compliance, and consent to adoptions. DCF is in discussion with the Tribe's attorney to clarify any additional updates to the existing draft.

The WTGH (A) terminated the IGA in 2013. Up until recently, it had been communicated that an IGA had not been prioritized. In April 2019, WTGH (A) indicated they are prepared to proceed. DCF is committed and eager for future collaboration with WTGH (A) on negotiating and updating the IGA.

Sharing the APSR with each MA Tribe

DCF and the two Wampanoag Tribes meet throughout the year, and will continue to review progress toward goals identified by DCF and the Tribes in the development of the Child and Family Services Plan. These goals include increasing Tribal foster homes, continued compliance in implementing ICWA, serving on a QEW committee, and open and consistent communication. DCF continues to lead collaboration among all parties. Upon finalization of the MA APSR, a copy will be shared with both Tribes by the DCF ICWA Coordinator.

Notification of Indian Parents and Tribes

The DCF efforts to educate staff about ICWA through training, its Intranet page and outreach by Regional ICWA Liaisons has significantly impacted ICWA compliance. In 2015, 100 ICWA notices were sent across the country for 35 families compared to a recent 12 month period of time (5/1/2018-5/1/2019) where 983 notices to Tribes for 238 families were sent across the county. MA DCF received 272 ICWA inquiries between May 1, 2018 and May 1, 2019 and as of May 1, 2019 168 inquiries were in process. ICWA inquiries are considered in process when DCF is either working with a family to collect family tree information or waiting for a response from the identified Tribe(s).

In order to ensure the most comprehensive family tree information is sent to Tribes to determine enrollment, MA DCF has employed several practices. Social workers are encouraged to meet with immediate and extended family members and explore family tree information. When family is unavailable or unable to provide comprehensive family tree information, MA DCF utilizes an Accurant Search. Accurant is a database that searches public records for information such as names, dates of birth, addresses, and phone numbers when demographic information is added.

Notification to parents now includes a letter, with additional resources for information on ICWA to further inform NA/AN families about the rights and protections afforded under the Act. Notification to the Eastern Regional BIA includes a Certificate of Service to meet ICWA compliance.

All ICWA notices to family and Tribes include information regarding court proceedings in the case, protective concerns as outlined in the petition, their right to intervene in court proceedings, and transfer jurisdiction to a Tribal court. When sending a notice, DCF diligently works to obtain responses. When a Tribe has not responded to an initial ICWA notice, additional attempts to obtain are made.

DCF is able to monitor and assess its compliance with ICWA through the use of a database maintained by the ICWA Coordinator. The Coordinator tracks all components of an ICWA case. When a child is eligible for enrollment in a federally recognized Tribe, the ICWA Coordinator records this in the demographic section of the electronic case record. Tribal ID numbers are recorded as well. In addition, ICWA notices and Tribal responses are uploaded to DCF's electronic case record as of May 2018.

Special Placement Preferences (Past, Present, and Future)

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe continues to recruit tribal members to become foster homes specifically to take tribal children. DCF works collaboratively with WTGH (A) and MWT upon placement of children who may be eligible for membership to ensure that ICWA placement preferences are met. Tribes are able to contact any of five ICWA Liaisons at any time to address clinical questions, concerns that arise on specific family cases and questions related to special placement preferences.

As soon as a child enters placement, MA DCF social workers employ a diligent search for relatives to ensure placement preference is followed. Examples of Placement Preferences are included in the ICWA

trainings, can be found on the ICWA Intranet page, and are reinforced by the ICWA Coordinator and ICWA Liaisons.

As needed, the ICWA Coordinator and Liaisons will contact the ICWA Director of MWT and the Human Service Director of WTGH (A) to inquire about open foster homes for children from other Tribes. In some previous cases, the MWT has offered placement for children from other Tribes when other preferences were explored and couldn't be met.

DCF has implemented ICWA language in the administrative forms connected to six-week placement meetings (following court custody) and Permanency Planning meetings. While the goal at DCF is to document any NA/AN heritage at the time of intake and placement, these meetings provide an opportunity for DCF to ensure compliance is met if the question has not been addressed.

DCF has developed an informative guide that will be given to all DCF foster parents regarding ICWA's purpose and requirements.

DCF is encouraging its staff to ask potential foster parents about any Tribal affiliation in order to identify additional Tribal homes. DCF and the Tribes agree that identifying Tribal homes that this is part of a shared five-year vision.

Active Efforts to prevent breakup of the Indian Family (past, present and future)

DCF continues to make strides in its commitment towards Active Efforts. DCF has five ICWA Liaisons who have trained staff on Active Efforts. The training includes specific examples of practices that fulfill the Active Efforts mandate. DCF staff receives support throughout the life of their ICWA cases from their ICWA Liaisons who are available for consultation at any time. Examples of Active Efforts can also be accessed via the DCF ICWA Intranet Page, which is available to all DCF staff.

DCF and the Tribes agree that best practice in preventing the breakup of families takes into account early identification of familial and informal community supports and culturally appropriate preventative services. Future implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act will serve to reinforce implementation of these shared values.

Use of Tribal Courts in child welfare matters, Tribal rights to intervene in State proceedings, or transfer proceedings to the jurisdiction of the Tribe

Since July 2015, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe has the capacity to take jurisdiction of protective cases. MA DCF and the MWT have discussed DCF's internal process to ensure documents needed for the transfer of cases occurs smoothly. To date, the Tribe has taken jurisdiction of two cases.

Strategies to improve the compliance with ICWA (Past, Present, and Future)

Past Achievements

- In December 2016, the Bureau of Indian Affairs finalized and update on ICWA regulation. In response, the DCF team has updated its training and guidance around all aspects of its ICWA application. In implementing the guidelines, DCF has been able to provide clear and uniform guidance on best practice.
- Between November 2015 and June 2017 funding was provided by the Court Improvement Project to hire a part-time DCF ICWA Coordinator to work on the administrative requirements of ICWA. DCF fully funded a full time ICWA Coordinator as of January 2018. DCF recognized the need for this

position with the increased receipt of ICWA inquiries. An ICWA Clinical Consultant and Deputy General Counsel also became an integral part of the ICWA team at that time, providing for both clinical and legal expertise.

- Between FFY15-FFY19, DCF has been represented at the National Indian Child Welfare Association's annual conference
- DCF launched its ICWA intranet page in 2016. This has served as a great reference to staff to submit ICWA inquiries in a timely manner, increase the understanding of ICWA as well as providing Supervisors with agenda topics for Unit meetings that result in improved compliance. This page is updated regularly, and staff is encouraged to visit the page in trainings and during ICWA inquiries.
- As of FFY16 the DCF ICPC 100A form (for interstate placement purposes) includes a section for ICWA eligibility; another mechanism to track and ensure compliance with ICWA. ICPC staff work concurrently with ICWA to ensure that Tribal affiliation is clarified prior to an ICPC taking place.
- DCF has incorporated ICWA into current and updated policies. These include the Protective Intake Policy, policy on Missing or Absent Children from Departmental Care or Custody, the Family Assessment and Action Planning policy, among others.
- In July 2017 DCF launched a specific ICWA email account. This has ensured continuity in ICWA reporting and record keeping.
- On June 6, 2018, the ICWA team presented an overview of ICWA at the MA DCF Legal Managers meeting. The Legal Management team manages and supports MA DCF attorneys across the state. The overview covered topics such as the ICWA notice, internal process, active efforts, and qualified expert witnesses.
- Both Wampanoag Tribes have been invited to participate in the Steering Committee and the Advisory Group at the Children's Cove Multi-Disciplinary team that addresses Human Trafficking.
- On September 20, 2018 a meeting with ICWA Liaisons, Clinical Consultant, Coordinator and both MA Wampanoag Tribes took place on Martha's Vineyard. This meeting was organized and facilitated by MA DCF and hosted by the WTGH (A). Topics were geared toward ongoing ICWA compliance and a shared vision for future goals for collaboration. The discussion included updates from DCF and the Tribes, distribution of contact information, a discussion around Qualified Expert Witnesses, new guides created with DCF and Tribe input, Tribal foster homes and cultural plans, ongoing communication and quarterly meetings, and upcoming DCF and Tribe ICWA trainings.
- Negotiations began in April 2017 for the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between MA DCF and the MWT. Both parties agreed to changes to the initial draft of the IGA as of August 18, 2017.
- Since FFY15, 16 ICWA trainings have taken place. Eight DCF ICWA specific trainings have taken place between March 1, 2018 and March 1, 2019. These trainings were inclusive of Area Offices, Foster Care Reviewers, and Area Program Managers.
- Negotiations began in April 2017 for the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between MA DCF and the MWT. Both parties agreed to changes to the initial draft of the IGA as of August 18, 2017.

Present Initiatives

- DCF encourages staff to “ask the question” about family ancestry throughout the life of the family case since extended family members may embark on a history of the family tree after the initial question was asked or, the family may feel more comfortable talking about their heritage as their relationship with their social worker deepens. Best practice indicates that if DCF learns of any NA/AN heritage claimed by the family prior to any state custody hearing, DCF works with the family so that the family can communicate directly with the named tribe in order to ascertain family eligibility for membership. Early identification of potential tribal membership ensures that Active Efforts are utilized to prevent the breakup of the family. In cases where ICWA applies, DCF staff is encouraged to immediately collaborate with the family’s Tribe in order to identify and utilize culturally appropriate services. In addition, such identification ensures compliance with ICWA in legal proceedings.
- DCF is diligent about its process to uncover genealogy necessary for an ICWA notice. DCF enlists the assistance of the Attorney representing the appropriate parent to impress upon the parent the need to comply with this federal law. As described above, DCF also utilizes an Accurant search for missing family tree information. Ongoing work will continue to ensure that family trees in ICWA notices include the most comprehensive and accurate information obtainable.
- DCF maintains a full time ICWA Coordinator. This position ensures the timely submission of ICWA notices, collaboration with Tribes across the country, training support across the state and maintenance of the ICWA database.
- The ICWA Clinical Consultant provides the Coordinator with supervision, support related to ICWA compliance and strategic planning related to Tribal collaboration and the engagement of the ICWA Liaisons.
- The Deputy General Counsel provides legal supervision and support related to ICWA law and regulation.
- As of July, 2018, the ICWA Coordinator and the Deputy General Counsel have participated in monthly calls facilitated by the Child Welfare League of America and the National Indian Child Welfare Association. These calls are attended by ICWA representatives from each state, and allow for updates on legislation and policy impacting ICWA. The calls also serve as an opportunity for states to share information on ICWA compliance and best practice. DCF plans to continue its partnership with NICWA and CWLA
- Once eligibility in a Tribe is confirmed, the ICWA Coordinator is reaching out to Area Office teams to obtain tribal enrollment numbers for recordkeeping. Regional ICWA Liaisons are available to assist Area Office teams in enrolling eligible children in their Tribes. To this end, DCF record keeping has expanded to now include a value stating when a child’s enrollment status with a Tribe is “pending”. This allows for improved tracking of enrollment.
- In new Permanency Hearing Rules, DCF is including in its reports to the court, a section on what efforts have been made to determine if a child is an Indian child under the statute, and if appropriate, to notify Tribes.
- As of September 2018 two guides for field staff “When ICWA Applies” and “Active Efforts” have been drafted. The guide on Active Efforts was a collaborative effort with the MA Wampanoag Tribes.

- Both Wampanoag Tribes continue to be invited to participate in the Steering Committee and the Advisory Group at the Children's Cove Multi-Disciplinary team that addresses Human Trafficking.
- MA DCF ICWA record keeping has expanded to include a section in the electronic record to upload all ICWA notices, certified mailing receipts of received ICWA notices, and tribal letters of response. This ensures that records can be maintained in the database and easily accessed by DCF. As of September 2018, all previous ICWA notices and Tribal responses have been archived in their corresponding cases.
- Tribes are now notified of trials in cases where ICWA applies, even if they have been previously notified and are actively intervening in a case, in accordance with BIA guidelines.
- An in-service training was held, in May 2019, for DCF Social Workers and Supervisors across the state.

Future Goals

- Negotiations for the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between MA DCF and the MWT will continue in order to reach consensus.
- DCF is committed to serving on a Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) Committee, which will be made up of tribal, state and legal representatives, pending Tribal Council Approval.
- An in-service training will be held this year for DCF staff in November 2019.
- Trainings across the state will continue. Both MA Wampanoag Tribes are provided updates on scheduled training and are regularly and will continue to be invited to co-lead trainings.
- The Tribes and MA DCF have committed to having ongoing communication and quarterly formal and informal meetings.
- DCF and the Tribes have a goal of increasing the number of licensed Tribal foster homes. In addition, identifying existing Tribal foster parents via active inquiry is also a goal.
- DCF plans to maintain and build on past and present initiatives to maintain and improve ICWA compliance.

C6. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT (CAPTA) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS AND UPDATE

Describe substantive changes, if any, to state law or regulations, including laws and regulations relating to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, that could affect the state's eligibility for the CAPTA State Grant (section 106(b)(1)(C)(i) of CAPTA). The state must also include an explanation from the State Attorney General as to why the change would, or would not, affect eligibility. (Note: States do not have to notify ACF of statutory changes or submit them for review if they are not substantive and would not affect eligibility.)

In the past year, there have been no statutory or regulatory changes related to the prevention of child abuse or neglect that affect Massachusetts' eligibility for CAPTA.

Describe any significant changes from the state's previously approved CAPTA plan in how the state proposes to use funds to support the 14 program areas enumerated in section 106(a) of CAPTA. (See section 106(b)(1)(C)(ii) of CAPTA).

The following are new proposed uses of FY20 CAPTA funds:

- 1. Engaging the Harvard Center on the Developing Child to train DCF staff on applying the science of early childhood development to enhance child protection practice (\$200,000)**

CAPTA Priority Areas

- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including training on early childhood development
- 2. Creating and disseminating a video on "A Day in the Life of a DCF Social Worker" to illustrate the key aspects of the job and aide in the recruitment and retention of social workers (\$50,000)**

CAPTA Priority Areas

- Improving the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and families, and the supervisors of such individuals, through the child protection system, including improvements in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers.
- 3. Policy Implementation; supporting the hiring of a policy implementation manager to ensure field staff are well-trained on implementing new policies (additional \$50,000)**

CAPTA Priority Areas

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect
- Improving case management, including ongoing case monitoring and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families.

4. Supporting infant safe sleep, particularly for Substance Exposed Newborns (SEN) (\$50,000)

CAPTA Priority Areas

Improving case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families;

5. Increased funding to Children's Charter Division of Key Program, Inc. to work with families with children experiencing complex trauma (additional \$95,000)

CAPTA Priority Area

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect
- Improvement of case management and delivery of services

6. Enhance the Department's web-based IT system, i-Familynet, to facilitate more consistent and reliable recording of required Plan of Safe Care information. Modifications will be made to the platform to prompt users to ask specific questions related to Plan of Safe Care during Screening and Response stages and also facilitate necessary aggregate data collection (\$60,000).

CAPTA Priority Area

- Developing and updating systems of technology that support the program and track reports of child abuse and neglect from intake through final disposition and allow interstate and intrastate information exchange.

Describe how CAPTA State Grant funds were used, alone or in combination with other federal funds, in support of the state's approved CAPTA plan to meet the purposes of the program since the state submitted its last update on June 30, 2018 (section 108(e) of CAPTA).

1. Policy Implementation

CAPTA Priority Areas

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect
- Improving case management, including ongoing case monitoring and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families.

FY19 Expenditures, Activities and Accomplishments

For FY19, DCF spent \$93,255 in CAPTA funds to support training, coaching, facilitating and other critical implementation needs for practice and policy changes.

The breakdown is as follows:

Implementation Coaches:	\$68,000
Implementation Coaching Fringe:	\$25,255

The Implementation Coaches trained and coached on the following policies in FY19:

- Family Assessment and Action Planning
- Supervision
- Protective Intake
- Missing or Absent Children
- Foster Care Review.

Their training and coaching activities included area office training as well as unit and social worker specific coaching. Additionally, they worked on coaching around clinical formulations.

2. DCF Central Office Nurse

CAPTA Priority Areas

- Case management, case monitoring and delivery of services to families
- Supporting collaboration between public health agencies and the child protection system to support health needs
- Developing, implementing, or operating programs to assist in obtaining or coordinating necessary services for families with disabled infants with life-threatening conditions using existing social and health services.

FY19 CAPTA Expenditures, Activities and Accomplishments

During FY19 DCF used CAPTA funds at approximately \$97,369 to support this critical central office nurse position.

The breakdown is as follows:

Salary:	\$71,000
Fringe:	\$26,369

The DCF central office nurse is a key part of DCF's work to ensure timely access to quality health care for children and youth in the custody of the Department. The central office nurse provides consultation to DCF staff and foster and adoptive parents statewide regarding all healthcare and medical issues for children involved with DCF. The nurse also manages the five of Regional Nurses and co-manages the DCF Childrens Hospital Nurse Liaison in addition to working with other state agencies, community health providers and hospitals.

She is available to consult on cases involving Substance Exposed Newborns (SEN), Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), as well as serious and life-threatening medical issues for any infant, child, or youth.

Focuses in FY19 included:

1. The central office nurse now has access the Medicaid claims database which can provide key information about the medical history of a child in the Department's custody. The nurses send reports with key information to the social workers to help identify all medical providers that have been involved with the child and improve care management.

2. The central office nurse worked extensively with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to coordinate the implementation of Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) by the state's Medicaid program, MassHealth. The Department's nurses and medical social workers were all trained on important changes to ensure children and families continued to be covered and receive necessary services.

Worked with MassHealth to select a new health plan to administer the Special Kids/Special Care Program. This program is crucial for DCF-involved children and the central office nurse ensured children had a smooth transition and foster parents were notified about the changes.

3. Regional Clinical Consultation

CAPTA Priority Area

- Improvement of case management, including ongoing monitoring and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families.

FY2019 CAPTA Expenditures, Activities and Accomplishments

During FY19 DCF used CAPTA funds at approximately \$78,000 to continue to purchase clinical consultations and evaluations. Across the state, these consultations and evaluations were used for the following purposes:

- Stabilizing children exposed to multiple and severe trauma
- Prevention of higher-level/higher cost placements
- Identification of clinical needs to keep children at home safely, when possible
- Risk analysis to assist social workers in review of treatment options
- Consultation at clinical reviews to help staff identify or clarify their understanding of the mental/behavioral health issues families and children are experiencing to enable the development of more appropriate service plans
- Consultation services at Family Team Meetings

4. Children's Charter Division of Key Program, Inc.

CAPTA Priority Area

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect
- Improvement of case management and delivery of services

FY2019 CAPTA Expenditures, Activities and Accomplishments

During FY19, DCF spent \$95,675 of CAPTA funds to contract with Children's Charter, a division of Key Program Inc. Children's Charter provides state-of-the-art forensic clinical evaluations for DCF's most complex cases of child maltreatment that need intensive, in-depth assessment and treatment services to children involved in criminal court cases.

Children's Charter provides forensic evaluation services to children, between the ages of 3 and 17, who have experienced and/or witnessed trauma. Children's Charter accepts referrals from any DCF Area office and to date have received referrals from 10 different DCF Area Offices. The services that Children's Charter provides have been, and continue to be, highly valued by DCF Area Offices, courts, healthcare professionals, and other community stakeholders.

In FY19, Children's Charter and DCF focused on strategies related to underserved priority geographical areas in Massachusetts, most recently the Central Region. Children's Charter provided multi-disciplinary forensic evaluations to approximately 115 children and families annually. The FY19 referral rate is outpacing FY18 rate, demonstrating continued need for this service.

5. Parental Stress Line

CAPTA Priority Area

- Case management, case monitoring, and delivery of services to families
- Developing information to educate the public on the role of the child protection system.

FY2019 CAPTA Expenditures, Activities and Accomplishments

During FY19 DCF spent \$45,000 of CAPTA funds to support a Parents Helping Parents (PHP), a parental stress line [1-800-632-8188] in Massachusetts. Parents Helping Parents' mission is: Empowering parents to nurture children and prevent child abuse.

During FY19, DCF used CAPTA funds to contract with Parents Helping Parents (PHP) to pay for staff time and associated costs (space, supplies, etc.) to operate the Parental Stress Line and also to recruit, train and support volunteers. PHP's Parental Stress Line plays a key role in the primary prevention work being done in Massachusetts to prevent child abuse before it occurs. The Parental Stress Line is a 24-hour helpline that offers support, empathy, and crisis intervention counseling to parents and caregivers who are having difficulty coping with the stresses of parenting. Information and referral to other services are provided, but the primary purpose is to provide parents with someone to talk to about their parenting problems.

The Parental Stress Line continues to receive approximately 4,000 calls during the year. Calls to PHP's Parental Stress Line are answered by volunteers who are recruited and trained by Parental Stress Line staff. The training program covers child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention, child discipline, healthy parent-child communication and relationships, telephone counseling techniques and other relevant material. Counselors answer calls to the Parental Stress Line. All volunteers have access to a supervisor round the clock to answer any questions or talk through any issues that arise.

The Parental Stress Line demonstrably helps families by being available to them during moments of crisis. In 2018, 62% of callers were agitated and very upset at the beginning of their call. Only 12% were agitated at the end of their call. Furthermore, 71% of callers planned to take at least one positive action to make things better.

6. Family Engagement and Voice

CAPTA Priority Area

- Case management, case monitoring and delivery of services to families.

FY2019 CAPTA Expenditures, Activities and Accomplishments

In FY19, \$65,000 in CAPTA funds were used to:

- Provide stipends to parents and former consumers to participate in the decision-making processes at the Department by serving on the Family Advisory Committee (FAC).

- Support Parent Leadership Trainings to former consumers to prepare them to be confident participants and productive members of area boards and other forums where the voice of former consumers must be present.
- Provide parent stipends associated with DCF's Fatherhood Initiative and Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising.

The Family Advisory Committee (FAC): FAC is a diverse group foster and adoptive parents, mothers, fathers, and kin who have formerly had open protective cases with DCF, and/or people who were involved with DCF as youth. Their viewpoint is necessary as DCF strives to assist children and youth in achieving permanency/forever homes.

Parent Leadership Trainings: The FAC members participated in 18 professional and para-professional conferences and over 150 training opportunities related to initiatives on the action plan. These trainings provide parent education, information on program development, and skill building modules on group dynamics and facilitation. The primary area of training needs this year focused on two-generation approaches to addressing needs of both children and their adult caregivers together and finding better ways to support grandparents and kinship caregivers in the face of the opioid crisis.

Fatherhood Initiative: The FAC maintains an active role in promoting and supporting the Father Engagement work of the agency. In addition to increasing the number of fathers on Committee, the parents actively participate in Area Office FELT, the Regional Father and Family Networks and Inter-Agency Fatherhood Workgroups. The core member of the Fatherhood Sub-committee works closely with the DCF Office to facilitate Nurturing Fathers Programs and Young Fathers Support Groups. Members participate in and help to coordinate and host the Annual Massachusetts Fatherhood Summit and the New England Fathering Conference.

Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: In 2018, the Commission continued its mission to provide information, resources and support to grandparents and relative caregivers throughout Massachusetts. The Commission visited 13 different communities in 2018 and held workshops and trainings. Approximately 350 grandparents, relative caregivers, and providers attended these workshops. The Commission held its annual "Conference for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Community Support Providers" which was attended by almost 200 people, 65% of whom were grandparents and relative caregivers.

7. Implementing Plans of Safe Care

CAPTA Priority Area

- Case management, case monitoring and delivery of services to families.
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training
- Supporting and enhancing interagency collaboration among public health agencies, agencies in the CPS system, and agencies carrying out private community-based programs

FY2019 CAPTA Expenditures, Activities and Accomplishments

In FY19, in order to increase agency capacity to address Plans of Safe Care, six Substance Abuse / Plan of Safe Care Coordinator positions were developed. These will enhance DCF's ability to fully integrate this work both across the agency and as a primary participant in a statewide approach to serving families at risk of substance misuse. Additionally, a full-time position of Director of Substance Abuse Services was developed to lead this work for the agency and be the primary liaison with DPH.

Submit a copy of annual citizen review panel report(s). Include a copy of the state agency's most recent written responses to the panel(s) that describes whether or how the state will incorporate the recommendations of the panel(s) (as appropriate) to improve the child protection system. (See section 106(c)(6) of CAPTA.)

DCF's three citizen review panels are:

- **Statewide Child Fatality Review Team**
- **DCF Family Advisory Committee**
- **DCF Joint Youth Advisory Committee**

An overview of each report is included below and each report is included in the Appendix.

Please note the 2018 Statewide Child Fatality Review Team report will be finalized this fall. Please see the 2017 final report attached.

CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL ONE

Statewide Child Fatality Review Team

In 2000, Massachusetts enacted child fatality review legislation to bring professionals together from a variety of disciplines and experiences to examine individual fatality cases. The goal of the teams is to decrease the incidence of preventable child deaths and injuries. The objectives of this review are to facilitate interagency networking and collaboration and to produce recommendations for changes that will protect the health and safety of children.

The law establishes the State Team within the office of the Chief Medical Examiner and additional Local Teams within each of 11 District Attorneys' offices. Members of the teams are drawn from state departments of public health, children and families, mental health, developmental services, education, and youth services. There is also representation from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Massachusetts SIDS Center, the Massachusetts Hospital Association, state and local police, and the juvenile courts.

The Local Teams collect information on individual cases, discuss case information in team meetings and advise the State Team by making recommendations for changes in law, policy and practice that will prevent child deaths. Through the review process, child fatality review teams promote collaboration among the agencies that respond to child deaths and provide services to family members.

A principal responsibility of the State Team is to provide ongoing advice and support for the Local Teams through training, guidance and the dissemination of information pertinent to the protection of children. A second responsibility is to review Local Team recommendations and combine them with its own research in making final recommendations to the governor, the legislature and the public.

During 2017, local CFR teams reviewed 102 child deaths and made 49 recommendations to the state CFR Team. Based on recommendations received from local teams, the state CFR team released a formal recommendation in 2017 that mandated reporters across the state file a 51A form any time a sudden, unexplained death of a child occurs. In response to this recommendation, DCF has been receiving, screening and responding where necessary, to these 51a reports. DCF continues to refer these reports to the local law enforcement agency as well as the local Office of the District Attorney.

CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL TWO

DCF Family Advisory Committee

The Family Advisory Committee (FAC) brings together a diverse group of individuals who have had direct experience with the Department to provide input into the development of policies, practice and programs. The goal of the Committee is to increase parent involvement and expand family voice throughout DCF. Some Committee members have been open consumers with the Department (including having their children placed in foster care or residential placement) and others have served as foster or adoptive parents.

Key work in FY19 included:

- Increasing representation of parents on the FAC
- FAC Leadership Team attending monthly Statewide Managers meeting
- Increasing the number of FAC members serving on the DCF Area Boards
- FAC members serve on interagency work groups at the Department of Mental Health and Department of Youth Services
- Supporting fatherhood engagement through support groups and the Sixth Annual Fatherhood Leadership Summit

CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL THREE

DCF Joint Youth Advisory Committee

The DCF Joint Youth Advisory Committee consists of statewide representation of former and current young adults served by DCF with support and guidance from the Board of the Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni.

The mission of the Joint Youth Advisory Committee is to support DCF's work to create and implement effective policy and practice that provides for the safety, permanency and well-being of children, youth, and young adults.

Activities of the Committee in FY19 included:

- Hosted the DCF Commissioner and the Director of Foster Care Review to provide feedback on policy and practice and strategize about ongoing collaboration.
- Worked with regional DCF foster parent recruiters to plan innovative ways they can further assist in the recruitment of adolescent foster homes.
- Held planning sessions for the 2019 Self Care and Wellness Conference.
- Served as panelists in permanency attainment trainings across the Commonwealth.
- Continued participation in MAPP trainings and regional recruitment events.
- Partnered with training staff and leadership at DCF to present at New Social Worker Pre-service training.
- Gathered alumni from across the Commonwealth for the annual Alumni Thanksgiving Dinner.

Provide an update on the state's continued efforts to support and address the needs of infants born and identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (see section 106(b)(2)(B)(ii) - (iii) of CAPTA) including information on:

- *Any changes made to implementation and/or lessons learned from implementation.*
- *Any multi-disciplinary outreach, consultation or coordination the state has taken to support implementation (among the state CPS agency, the state Substance Abuse Treatment Authority, hospitals, health care professionals, home visiting programs and Public Health or Maternal and Child Health Programs).*
- *Monitoring of plans of safe care to determine whether and in what manner local entities are providing referrals to and delivery of appropriate services for substance-exposed infants and affected family members and caregivers.*
- *Technical assistance needs the state has determined are needed to support effective implementation of these provisions.*

Operationalizing the policies and procedures related to the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) and Plans of Safe Care (PoSC) began July 1, 2018, after the Program Improvement Plan was approved in its entirety. A multi-agency effort moved forward with implementation in a variety of ways including a series of webinars hosted by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The content of these webinars was intended for community-based providers, health care providers and substance use treatment providers across the Commonwealth and included information on:

- Legislative Context
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Identification and Engagement
- Coordination of PoSC
- Collaboration between providers
- Reporting and Communication with DCF
- Provider Collaboration
- PoSC Guidance and Resources

In addition, DCF staff received training regarding PoSC procedures. The content of these trainings included information about the CARA legislation, how to determine if a PoSC exists when a report is filed with DCF, guidance for the reporter if a PoSC does not exist and how to integrate an existing PoSC into the DCF Action Plan. DPH developed a website site in collaboration with the Institute for Health and Recovery (IHR) that provides resources to support Provider efforts in screening, engagement, development and coordination of a PoSC. <http://www.healthrecovery.org/safecare/> In addition, DCF's Intake Policy ensures consistent attention to this matter; directing staff to determine the existence of a PoSC and obtain a copy when able. The Policy also supports provider efforts by directing them to resources about PoSC, should they feel the need.

In order to meet the federal data reporting requirements, enhancements to the DCF Information Technology System is currently in development. In order to increase agency capacity in addressing PoSC, six Substance Abuse / Plan of Safe Care Coordinator positions were developed. These will enhance DCF's ability to fully integrate this work both across the agency and as a primary participant in a statewide approach to serving families at risk of substance misuse. Additionally, a full-time position of Director of Substance Abuse Services was developed to lead this work for the agency and be the primary liaison with DPH.

Update on the 2018 CAPTA Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

In March 2018, DCF submitted a CAPTA Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to the Children's Bureau relating to Plans of Safe Care and two of the Department's Citizen Review Panels. In November 2018, the Children's Bureau confirmed DCF's successful competition of the PIP.

The goal of the Plan of Safe Care PIP was to support DCF's full compliance with the Plans of Safe Care requirements added to CAPTA by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016. The PIP outlined DCF's plans to meet the CAPTA requirements that each state must have provisions and procedures in place to: ensure healthcare providers notify the child welfare agency about infants identified as being affected by any substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms; develop and monitor plans of safe care for these infants; and address the health and substance use disorder treatment needs of the infant and affected caregiver. DCF worked in partnership with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and other key stakeholders to develop written guidance and protocols for the consistent and objective hospital screening of pregnant and postpartum women. DCF worked to ensure mandated reporters consistently notify the Department and DCF is appropriately assessing these reports. A plan of safe care template was developed, piloted and finalized, and DPH has distributed it to service providers. Supplemental internet-based resources are also available. DCF is also part of an interagency task force examining how to improve practice on the early identification, screening, engagement and treatment of pregnant women using substances.

The PIP also addressed the CAPTA requirements which require states to establish not less than three citizen review panels. These panels have responsibility for evaluating the extent to which DCF is effectively discharging its child protection responsibilities in accordance with CAPTA's state plan requirements and child protection standards. DCF worked to enhance the existing Family Advisory Committee by recruiting new members, holding a public forum to solicit input on the state's child protection program, and providing opportunities for panel members to participate in discussions of case review results with regard to how well DCF is meeting its responsibilities to keep children safe. Efforts were also made to expand membership of the Joint Youth Advisory Committee and work with members to ensure there are opportunities for the panel to provide effective input.

Compliance with the New Legislation: Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization of 2018 amended on January 7, 2019

The reauthorization of CAPTA included an amendment which expands the scope of the assurance found at section 106(b)(2)(B)(vii) of CAPTA related to legal immunity for good faith reports of child abuse and neglect, to include professionals who are called upon to consult in a child abuse case, or provide a medical diagnosis. The amendment to CAPTA became effective upon enacted. Therefore, to comply with the latest change to CAPTA, Massachusetts must pass legislation to come into full compliance. As required by the CFSP program instruction, ACFY-CB-PI-19-02 issued on February 26, 2019, the Department has developed a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to meet this new requirement and will report progress-made in the next Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR).

Submit the name, address, and email for the state CAPTA coordinator:

CAPTA Coordinator:

Rebecca Brink
MA Department of Children and Families
600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111
617-748-2000 or Rebecca.K.Brink@MassMail.state.ma.us

C7. STATISTICAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

a. CAPTA Annual State Data Report Items

Information on Child Protective Service Workforce:

Education, Qualifications, and Training Requirements of Child Protective Personnel

Below we provide the job descriptions for the Department's social workers (Social Worker I & II) and Supervisors (Social Worker III):

Social Worker I, Bargaining Unit 8, Job Grade 19

Applicants must have (A) a Bachelor's degree or higher in social work, psychology, sociology, counseling, counseling education or criminal justice or a relevant human services degree and (B) a current and valid Licensures as a Licensed Social Work Associate, Licensed Social Worker, Licensed Certified Social Worker or Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker issued by the Massachusetts Board of Registration (applicants at the Department of Children and Families must obtain the required license in Social Work within the first nine (9) months of employment.)

The classification may require possession of a current and valid Motor Vehicle Driver's License at a class level specific to assignment.

Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

- Knowledge of family dynamics and human behavior.
- Ability to use a computer to type and perform basic computer tasks.
- Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, to appropriately document case activities and represent the agency in a professional manner.
- Ability to multi-task and prioritize responsibilities.
- Ability to interact effectively with and establish rapport with diverse teams and groups of people.
- Ability to gather information through questioning and observing individuals and by examining records and documents.
- Ability to maintain accurate and up to date records.
- Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.
- Ability to maintain a calm manner and interact appropriately with others in stressful and emergency situations.
- Ability to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with clients.
- Ability to exercise sound judgment to ensure safety of self and others.
- Ability to convey the above through acceptable means of documentation, written, typed, verbal.

Social Worker II, Bargaining Unit 8, Job Grade 20

Applicants must have (A) a Bachelor's degree or higher in social work, psychology, sociology, counseling, counseling education or criminal justice or a relevant human services degree and (B) a current and valid Licensures as a Licensed Social Work Associate, Licensed Social Worker, Licensed Certified Social Worker or Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker issued by the Massachusetts Board of Registration, and (C) and two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in social work, or (D) or any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

The classification may require possession of a current and valid Motor Vehicle Driver's License at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

- I. A Master's degree in social work, psychology, sociology, counseling, counseling education or criminal justice, or a relevant human services degree may be substituted for one (1) year of the required (C) experience.

Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

- Ability to act as a mentor and provide guidance to others.
- Ability to prioritize cases and identify true emergencies.
- Knowledge of agency policies and procedures.
- Knowledge of community resources and services for clients and families.

Social Worker III (Supervisor), Bargaining Unit 8, Job Grade 23

Applicants must have (A) a Master's degree in social work, psychology, sociology, counseling, counseling education or criminal justice or a relevant human services degree and (B) a current and valid Licensures as a Licensed Social Work Associate, Licensed Social Worker, Licensed Certified Social Worker or Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker issued by the Massachusetts Board of Registration, and (C) and three (3) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in social work, or (D) or any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

The classification may require possession of a current and valid Motor Vehicle Driver's License at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

- I. A Doctorate degree in a related field may be substituted for two (2) years of the required (C) experience.

Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

- Knowledge of State Agencies and family systems.
- Ability to lead others and organize work.

Data on the Education and Qualifications of Personnel

The chart below provides data on the higher education of social workers and the levels of licensure held.

Higher Education of Social Workers			
	1. number of social workers and supervisors who have a Bachelors' degree in social work or related field	3,246	Count of Social Worker Technician (A/B), Social Worker (D)/(G), and Social Worker Is, IIs, IIIs, and IVs FTEs who have a bachelor's degree or higher. DCF does not have data on specific scope of study. Data as of 2/2/2019
	2. number of social workers and supervisors who have a masters' degree in social work or related field	790	Count of Social Worker Technician (A/B), Social Worker (D)/(G), and Social Worker Is, IIs, IIIs, and IVs FTEs who have a master's degree or

			higher. DCF does not have data on specific scope of study. Data as of 2/2/2019
Licensure of Social Workers			
1. total number of social workers	3,369	Count of Case Reviewer (A/B), Clinical Social Worker (A/B), Clinical Social Worker (C) Clinical Social Worker (D), Social Worker (D)/(G), Social Worker Is, IIs, IIIs, and IVs FTEs. Data as of 2/2/2019	
2. total number of social workers holding licensure by level		131 staff members were within the probationary period from hire within which they can obtain their license. Data as of 2/1/2019	
LICSW	119		
LCSW	440		
LSW	657		
LSWA	1,999		
Total	3,215		

Demographic Information of Personnel

The chart below provides data on the demographics of our personnel.

Workforce Summary Report for DCF 2019 Q 2

EEO Job Category Description	Summary Total Workforce	Male	Male %	Female	Female %	Minorities	Minorities %	Veterans	Veterans %	Disabled	Disabled %
Officials and Administrators	321	70	21.7	251	78.3	73	22.8	1	0.3	11	3.5
Professionals	3668	657	17.9	3004	81.9	1301	35.5	19	0.5	84	2.3
Technicians	43	8	18.5	35	81.5	14	31.3	0	0.0	3	6.9
Protective Service: Non-Sworn	1	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Office/Clerical	207	23	11.1	183	88.4	95	45.8	1	0.5	10	4.7
Grand Total	4240	757	17.9	3474	81.9	1482	35.0	21	0.5	108	2.5

Caseload/Workload Requirements of Personnel

With the addition of staff and improvements in case decision-making, the Department has been able to significantly reduce its weighted average caseload (the average caseload carried by staff adjusted for the type of work being performed). In March 2016, the weighted average caseload for staff was 22.4. As of December 2018, it has dropped to 18.13 with an average family count of 15.3 families for ongoing social workers.

Juvenile Justice Transfers

Report the number of children under the care of the state child protection system who were transferred into the custody of the state juvenile justice system in FY 2018 (specify if another time period is used). Describe the source of this information, how the state defines the reporting population, and any other relevant contextual information about the data:

DCF, the state child protection agency, does not transfer custody to the Department of Youth Service (DYS), the State juvenile justice agency. In March 2019, DCF matched its records with children committed to DYS during calendar year 2018. DCF had custody of 54 (53 distinct) youth on the same day that they were committed by the courts to DYS. For 7 of these youth, DCF custody ended on the same day DYS was granted custody. The remaining 47 were in joint DCF/DYS custody for some period of time. The Department does not track discharge dates for DYS youth on its FamilyNet system, so is unable to determine how long joint custody continued.

b. Education and Training Vouchers

Identify the number of youth (unduplicated count) who received ETV awards from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 and July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. States may estimate a total if they do not have the total number for the 2018-2019 school year. Report the number of youth who were new voucher recipients in each of the school years.

Name of State: Massachusetts

<u>Final Number:</u>	Total ETVs Awarded	Number of New ETVs
2017-2018 School Year (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018)	481	226
2018-2019 School Year* (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019)	521	249

c. Inter-Country Adoptions:

Report the number of children who were adopted from other countries and who entered into state custody in FY 2018 as a result of the disruption of a placement for adoption or the dissolution of an adoption, the agencies who handled the placement or the adoption, the plans for the child, and the reasons for the disruption or dissolution.

The Department reviewed the cases of children who entered care during the federal fiscal year 2018 and who were previously adopted. The Department is not able to identify children who meet the criteria for entering as a result of a disruption of an intended international adoption and found no children who experienced a dissolution of an international adoption.

d. Monthly Caseworker Visit Data:

States are required to collect and report data on monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care (section 424(f) of the Act). Data for FY 2018 is to be reported separately from the 2015- 2019 Final Report and will be due for submission to CB by December 16, 2019.

The Department will submit the Monthly Caseworker Visit Data by December 16, 2019.

APPENDICES

CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS ANNUAL REPORTS:

Family Advisory Committee
Joint Youth Advisory Committee

Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Family Advisory Committee

Citizen Review Panel *Annual Report*

July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019



DCF Family Advisory Committee 2019 Annual Report (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019)

The purpose of the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) is to bring together a diverse group of community representatives whose various experiences with DCF provides a unique perspective from which to advise the Commissioner and help inform agency decisions. The composition of the FAC are family members with lived experience with the Department, had open protective cases with DCF, people who were involved with DCF as a youth, and community members invested in the safety and well-being of children across the Commonwealth.

The Department strives to keep its decision-making processes transparent by engaging community members in the review of new, or modified, agency initiatives. The FAC provides the opportunity for parents and other community members to have input into the development of practice, policies, and programs that affect families. The FAC builds mutual accountability between the Department and the families it serves by creating opportunities for dialogue and learning from both perspectives.

The FAC meets at least four times per year and is staffed by the DCF Community and Family Engagement Manager. Together, they develop a yearly Action Plan to guide the work of the FAC. FAC members receive stipends for their time and expertise. Some members choose to volunteer or are able to get release time from their employers.

Recruitment and Retention

In FY2017, the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) Leadership Team developed a Recruitment and Retention Plan to diversify the cohort of Family Representatives. The plan is designed to identify parents with lived experience as consumers of service with DCF. The group is comprised of Birth Parents, Foster Parents, Adoptive Parents, Kinship Caregivers, Alumni of Foster Care, Community Advocates, and Youth Representatives.

In FY 2019, we continued to increase the representation of parents on the FAC and began orientation and mentoring program to support new members. The current composition of the FAC is rich with experience and talent. The 15 women and 12 men who comprise the core of Family Representatives are a culturally diverse group of 9 African American, 15 Caucasian, and 3 Latinx Parents from each of the five Regions of the Commonwealth.

The group possesses diverse expertise in various disciplines including legal services, the courts, veteran services, administration, nursing, human services, juvenile justice, mental health, marketing, public relations, non-profit management, clergy, social work, and domestic violence.

Family Advisory Committee Action Plan

The FAC continues to consistently review and contribute to the Family Advisory Committee Action Plan. The primary goal of the Action Plan is to assist DCF by giving it a roadmap for the inclusion of community and parent participation that ensures that family voice is integrated into program planning, policy development and delivery and monitoring of Department's services.

To accomplish this, the FAC participates in various forums and operational meetings. The 12 member Leadership Team of the FAC participates in the monthly Statewide Managers meeting. This meeting includes DCF's Area, Regional, Legal and Central Office Leadership. The Leadership Team also attends

monthly Team Meetings with the Community Support Manager staffing the FAC. Additionally, the FAC Leadership Team facilitates and maintains FAC sub-committees and workgroups to coordinate the Action Plan activities with DCF staff.

The Family Advisory Committee members also serve on the DCF Area Boards as Family and Community Representatives. Currently, 16 members participate on DCF Area Boards.

The FAC members are involved in work groups that have made comprehensive changes to the way the agency's intake and service plans assist social workers to better engage families for better outcomes. For example, one of the major accomplishments in 2018 for the FAC and DCF was connecting Area Offices with Family Representatives on the FAC. These members are assisting in recruiting parents and community representatives and reviving DCF Area Boards.

DCF is working with the FAC to improve its practice. The primary area of focus on 2GEN or Two-generation approaches to addressing the needs of both children and their adult caregivers together and finding better ways to support Grandparents and Kinship caregivers in the face of the opioid crisis.

Inter-Agency Work

In past surveys with parents, the FAC identified a need for greater consistency in practice and communication between agencies for families who have children that are dually involved with our sister agencies, particularly the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Youth Services (DYS). It is a goal of the FAC to assist in improving these connections and lend support to parents.

Despite changes in the program collaboration, members of the FAC continue to serve on DMH's Caring Together Family Advisory Council. Both parents have lived experience with both agencies. The Family Advisory Council lends family voice and has been integral in the role of permanency in DCF, and have also been involved in other Caring Together discussions about families and permanency practice. FAC representatives and DCF Staff participate in an 80 member learning group on Permanency Practice Dialogue.

Caring Together services include a range of in-home and out of the home services for children and families involved with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and/or the DCF. Services provide clinically intensive treatment and outreach support to help build, strengthen and maintain connections to family, home and community so that children and families can live together successfully. Services are accessed by DCF and DMH staff in order to support children and families who need an intensive level of clinical treatment to return to or remain living with their families.

The Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) is an initiative of DYS with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Massachusetts juvenile justice leaders. Two FAC representatives participate in the Suffolk County and Hampden County Collaborative. JDAI's strategic planning is designed to:

- Reduce detention rates of low-risk youth
- Identify opportunities to reduce lengths of stay in detention through case processing reforms
- Reduce racial and ethnic disparities
- Replicate JDAI with fidelity at a local level

JDAI Massachusetts produced Seeing RED as a tool for the network of committed child welfare and juvenile justice stakeholders. This film lays out the problem of disproportional representation of children of color in the juvenile justice system and the national and local best practices to address disproportionality and disparate outcomes for youth.

In 2018, members of the FAC co-facilitated Seeing RED with community providers and DCF Area Office Staff. The facilitators provide training, support, and a peer network of individuals to share experiences and reflections. So far the team has conducted screening and discussions in twelve communities.

Additionally, the DYS Metro Region Family Advisory Council (FAC), in partnership with Northeastern University's Institute on Race and Justice, invited the FAC to its Second Annual Family Advisory Symposium. The symposium is an all-day community workshop to understand the impact of violence and trauma in communities and to discuss strategies to strengthen families, ourselves and our communities.

Permanency

The FAC continues its work to support families and bring family voice to DCF on permanency through father engagement, and kinship/grandparent support:

Fatherhood Engagement

As part of the recruitment and retention efforts, the FAC has reached out to recruit Dads and men who have lived experience to add to the diversity of the group. The new members enhanced the group's capacity to provide some direct and comprehensive father engagement work this year:

- Four of the FAC members co-facilitate Nurturing Father programs and Fathers' Support Groups at DCF offices, local Head Start programs, and Family Resource Centers;
- One of the FAC Leadership Team members co-facilitates a module of orientation for new DCF Social Worker staff;
- Eight fathers participate in the Fatherhood Ambassadors Program, an in-service presentation to DCF Area Office staff;
- FAC members actively participate in DCF Area Office Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Teams (FELTs) and the Inter-Agency Fatherhood Work Group; and
- Several Members of the Family Advisory Committee participated in this year's Massachusetts Fatherhood Summit and the New England Fathering Conference.

Sixth Annual Fatherhood Leadership Summit on September 17, 2018, DCF along with the Inter-Agency Fatherhood Work Group (IFW) (seven state agency partners MA Departments of Youth Services, Transitional Assistance, Housing and Community Development, Public Health, Revenue, Early Education and Care, and the Children's Trust), and the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and several family and community representatives, convened the sixth annual Massachusetts Fatherhood Leadership Summit. This highly successful event drew a diverse group of participants, including DCF staff, fathers who have had experiences in Massachusetts' systems, and representatives from agencies that work with and serve fathers including community organizations and providers, schools, high level leadership and policy representatives from state and federal agencies, and judges from the juvenile and probate courts.

The Summit's theme Taking Action – Transforming Policies and Pathways to Paternal Partnerships and Family Support" focused on deepening relationships and best practices across disciplines in our work engaging fathers in their children's lives. The forum featured International presentations from Mellow Parenting, a Scottish Organization who research, develop and implement evidenced-based Parenting Programs such as Mellow Bumps for Mums and Dads-to-be, Mellow Futures, a perinatal program for parents with Learning Difficulties and Mellow Ready, a preconception program for Young People. Mellow Mums, and Mellow Dads.

The rising number of young fathers in our Juvenile Justice programs is alarming and many of these young men are without guidance or support in the community. The contingency from Scotland introduced their Mellow Dad's program to the conference and the Department of Youth Services – our State's Juvenile Justice Agency. A positive result of the Summit was this connection which DYS also provided a tour of the Suffolk County facilities and introduced them to some of the young fathers in the system. In the UK, Mellow Parenting uses its Mellow Dad's curriculum with fathers in the Prison system as they are returning home.

In addition to hosting the Fatherhood Leadership Summit, The (IFW) has worked to reconnect with the expanding Father and Family Networks of the Children's Trust. In 2018, the IFW helped connect the Networks with DCF Area Office Fatherhood Engagement, Leadership (FELT) Teams in Regional Forums in the Western, Southern and Boston Regions.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Kinship Care

Opioid use in the Commonwealth has had a significant impact on the lives of grandparents and other relatives raising related children. In the coming year, the FAC will participate in facilitating focus groups and surveys to identify:

- individuals in the Commonwealth raising related children of relatives;
- individuals in the Commonwealth raising grandchildren because one or both of the parents are addicted to an opioid drug;
- resources available to provide services to both the grandparent or other relative caregivers as well as the children; and
- whether such services are coordinated in a manner that is useful to grandparents and other kin.

The Department in collaboration with FAC is continuing efforts to support some of the parents that receive limited support from DCF and the Courts i.e., Grandparents and Kinship Caregivers. The FAC has proposed a Family Representative Program pilot at a few DCF Area Offices. Family Representatives will work with the DCF staff to support and provide guidance for kinship families.

Parent Survey

In previous years, the FAC conducted a telephone survey to get input and assessment of family experience with services received from DCF. In the fall of 2015, a change of administration at the Secretary and Commissioners level there was an augmentation in strategies that shifted the agencies approach to address consumer feedback.

In order to obtain more accurate and immediate feedback from families receiving services or have ongoing case involvement with DCF, the FAC looks to support the Department in connecting with families. Proposed strategies are being considered by the new administration on how to effectively utilize the FAC and Family Representatives with Area Offices. This is one of the new goals to the FAC Action Plan going forward.

Area Board Support

DCF offices, following the 2009 agency reform legislation and its mandate that specified Area Boards, reactivated or initialized their local DCF Area Boards. Some have had sustained membership and are active in their support of the community, others are in need of additional support to activate, engage and maintain their membership in support of the affiliated office and community that is served by the DCF area office. In

2019, the FAC will form a Board Governance Committee to assist the Department with recruitment, retention, and support of Area Board members.

The Board Governance Committee Leadership team met to discuss the proposed actions, supports, and needs. It is the intended purpose of the FAC to:

- Create a framework to guide the development, function and provide support for the 29 DCF Area Advisory Boards
- Collect, maintain and share participation and contact information for DCF Area Advisory Boards
- Assess, plan and deliver statewide training opportunities for Board membership
- Develop and implement an annual statewide summit for Board leadership
- Implement an application support process for all applicants; participate in an appeal process for non-selected applicants

We propose that an annual Statewide Area Advisory Board Summit be scheduled each spring to offer the opportunity for statewide engagement in training and development, fostering inter-board connectivity and to further build connections between DCF leadership and Area Advisory Boards.

The first Annual Board Summit is scheduled for April 10, 2019, at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Shrewsbury. Given the varying proficiencies, the training for this kick-off event will include an overview related to the basics of forming and maintaining an Area Advisory Board, financial structures, working with DCF Area Directors, understanding community resources, and will offer participants an opportunity to liaise with other board leadership.

In future years, we will survey Area Advisory Board leadership in advance and provide relevant and timely information to best support their collective training needs. We may also host simultaneous break-out sessions to review baseline training needs if there are new members requiring a more basic-level of development.

Training and Professional Development

Being informed is the most significant attribute the parents of the Family Advisory Committee bring to their work. In the past year, Family Advisory Committee members participated in 18 professional and para-professional conferences and over 150 training opportunities related to initiatives on the action plan. These trainings provide parent education, information on program development, and skill building modules on group dynamics and facilitation. The primary area of training needs this year focused on 2GEN or Two-generation approaches to addressing needs of both children and their adult caregivers together and finding better ways to support Grandparents and Kinship caregivers in the face of the opioid crisis.

FAC members receive a stipend for their time. Through these activities, numerous FAC members have become Certified Facilitators, Master Trainers, and TOT Facilitators and several FAC members receive Continuing Education Unit (CEUs) for their participation.

The Pathways for Parents project (Pathways) was developed in 2003 to form and sustain the collaborative working relationship between the Federation for Children with Special Needs (“The Federation”) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Pathways provide a voice for parents in DCF venues and in multi-agency initiatives involving agencies of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and work to build capacity within the Federation to inform staff in their work with parents who also receive services from DCF. The Pathways coordinator also provides trainings and resources for DCF staff in aid of their work with children and families.

2019 Recommendations from the FAC

Recommendation 1:

The FAC will have appointed members by the Commissioner to sit on Citizens Review Panels for the Department of Children and Families. The purpose of this panel is to provide new opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring that the Commonwealth is meeting their goals of protecting children from abuse and neglect.

It is our goal to establish at least one panel that is composed of volunteer members who are broadly representative of the community including members with expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Accordingly, the Massachusetts panels should include membership from across the State; regional and local panels as they are developed, should include membership reflective of those geographic communities.

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication at the State and local level; the statute allows us to utilize existing members of Area Boards to add expertise and diverse representatives, so long as they also fulfill the CAPTA requirements. We will establish mandates that each of the three panels established under CAPTA must perform all the functions required by the statute, it does not prescribe that each panel engage in only these functions nor does it specify the depth or breadth of review.

The FAC will work with the department to create no less than three citizen review panels in accordance with section 106(1)(A) of CAPTA to:

1. Examine different portions of the State's policies and procedures relating to child abuse and neglect, and review of relevant cases, as determined appropriate by the panel, to determine the extent to which the agency is discharging its child protection responsibilities under its CAPTA State plan
2. Review of the operations and system evaluation with different portions of foster care and adoption programs
3. Conducting reviews of child fatalities and near fatalities occurring in different regions of the State based on the findings and recommendations

Recommendation 2:

The FAC is recommending a strategy or plan for meeting the need of a Parent Satisfaction Survey or a process to get feedback from parents.

Recommendation 3:

The FAC proposes incorporation of the *Better Together Program* into MA state's training process.

Departmental Response:

Recommendation 1: The Department works to ensure parents' voices guide the delivery of services so that families receive the support they need. This commitment is demonstrated by having family and youth voices in critical areas of policy and represented at different levels of organizational decision making points. Parents participate in the Agency Improvement Leadership Team (AILT), Area Boards, and Requests for

Reponses (RFRs) when services are being procured. Appointees to the Statewide Child Fatality Team are established by state law (M.G.L. ch 38, Sec.2A). The Department has raised the FAC's request for a citizen voice on this Team to the District Attorney's office and they are reviewing the request.

Recommendation 2: The Department will host focus groups with members of the FAC team and other groups such as Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Kinship families and Fathers groups to discuss topics that will provide valuable insight as DCF works to improve various aspects of the work with families. The Department is committed to engaging in strategic planning with families to facilitate topic-driven surveys, analyze results, and make recommendations to senior leadership.

Recommendation 3: The Department is reviewing the "Better Together Curriculum" and other curricula that establish and foster a greater relationship between families and child welfare staff. Social Workers participate in ongoing trainings at local area offices and ensure that family and youth voices are central to child welfare planning and improvement efforts.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Joint Youth Advisory Committee

Citizen Review Panel

Annual Report

July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019



DCF Joint Youth Advisory Committee

2019 Annual Report (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019)

I. Committee Board Members

The DCF Joint Youth Advisory Committee consists of statewide representation of former and current young adults served by DCF with support and guidance from the Board of the Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni.

II. Committee Mission

The mission of the Joint Youth Advisory Committee is to support DCF's work to create and implement effective policy and practice that provides for the safety, permanency and well-being of children, youth, and young adults.

III. Structure

The DCF Joint Youth Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives of the regional DCF Youth Advisory Board and the Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni Board of Directors. The Joint Committee is youth and young adult driven. The Alumni Network Board provides direction from adult alumni and other professionals for the initiatives defined and driven by the Youth Advisory Board. The Committee provides recommendations to DCF regarding programs and/or policy needs, development, and implementation, as well as practice-related issues.

IV. Meetings and Activities

The Regional Youth Advisory Boards generally meet monthly, and the Joint Committee meets quarterly. Joint Committee meetings serve to strengthen the activities that will provide insight and counsel to DCF.

Some examples of the activities of the Joint Committee are as follows:

- Hosted the DCF Commissioner and the Director of Foster Care Review to provide feedback on policy and practice and strategize about ongoing collaboration.
- Assembled and distributed care packages for children and youth entering care.
- Worked with regional DCF foster parent recruiters to plan innovative ways they can further assist in the recruitment of adolescent foster homes.
- Held planning sessions for the 2019 Self Care and Wellness Conference.
- Served as panelists in permanency attainment trainings across the Commonwealth.
- Continued participation in MAPP trainings and regional recruitment events.
- Partnered with training staff and leadership at DCF to present at New Social Worker Pre-service training.
- Hosted a multi-cultural pot luck dinner and led a discussion of cultural competence in the child welfare field.
- Gathered alumni from across the Commonwealth for the annual Alumni Thanksgiving Dinner.
- Participated in an awareness walk sponsored by the MassNFCA.

V. Plans for 2018/2019

The Joint Committee undertook a number of initiatives relative to self-assessment with the goal of strengthening and expanding membership. The following activities from FY19 are directly connected to the prior year's goals.

The Youth Advisory Board Members have committed to sending representatives to MassNFCA board meetings and have attended two meetings in the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019. The MassNFCA sponsors social and networking opportunities geared at strengthening the work of the Joint Advisory Committee by allowing members to get to know each other, identify common ground, and shared interests in serving the foster care population.

Two focus groups were held this year and formal feedback was presented to the Adolescent Services Unit about the support that is needed to expand their current roles and responsibilities, the obstacles they face, and goals they would like to achieve as a group.

The Committee is currently drafting a recruitment and retention plan that it plans to submit to the Department with identified ways the agency can support the plan in May 2019.

VI. Recommendations from the Joint Committee

Recommendation 1: The Department's Youth Advisory Board has been active for more than 17 years. Presently, there are 30 members of the Regional Youth Advisory Boards who are committed to promoting change for future foster youth through their voice, advocacy, and action. The Department should continue to support the Youth Advisory Board, its connection to the MassNFCA and allocate funds to support activities.

Recommendation 2: In order for the Committee to provide recommendations to the Department on services, policy and practice, the Committee should be regularly updated about new agency initiatives and invited to give feedback on the impact of the work of the Department.

Recommendation 3: The Regional Youth Advisory Boards should continue to meet monthly, providing a forum for youth in out-of-home placement to voice their concerns and offer suggestions to the Department on issues facing youth in care. DCF should support these meetings by providing space and meeting facilitation, stipends, and/or transportation when needed for members.

Recommendation 4: The Committee recommends that the leadership of the Training and Foster Care Review Divisions continue the collaboration that began this past year with ongoing discussions about how youth are impacted by different service and care models.

Recommendation 5: DCF should continue to obtain ongoing feedback from the youth and young adults served, to help inform policy and practice that effectively addresses the needs of youth. The Regional Youth Advisory Boards and the MA Network of Foster Care Alumni are vital partners guiding agency service planning and delivery. The efforts of the Board members over the years have resulted in the Foster Child Tuition and Fee Waivers, the Foster Child Grant, core aspects of the "sustaining connections with transition age youth" in the Permanency Planning Policy, foster parent recruitment/training as well as guidance to both DCF and the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in the creation of the subsidized housing program for former foster youth – Youth Transitioning to Success Program. The Department should continue to provide funding and staffing to continue to support these programs.

VII. Departmental Response

Recommendation 1: DCF is committed to its partnership with the Youth Advisory Committee as well as the Youth Advisory Board affiliation with the Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni. The Department commits to provide staffing and other means required to facilitate regular meetings and meet the needs of the membership to sustain involvement.

Recommendation 2: DCF will ensure staff are present at all Youth Advisory Committee meetings and prepared to update the group on current agency activity regarding policy and practice. This staffing is currently out of the Adolescent and Young Adult Services Unit of DCF.

Recommendation 3: DCF is committed to providing space and other logistical support to the Youth Advisory Committee. In response to a need to retain members, the agency provided Webex access to the Youth Advisory Boards so that at large members could attend meetings.

Recommendation 4: The Directors of Foster Care Review and The Child Welfare Training Institute will engage in follow up meetings in the fall of 2019 to provide a feedback loop to the Committee and plan future agenda items.

Recommendation 5: Funding and staffing for the Department's supported higher education programs and housing programs remain in the agencies priorities and in the agency's budget. The Department remains committed to the success of these programs.